



## NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE FIRE MARSHALS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Community Risk Reduction Week: The Home Fire That Happens “Somewhere Else” Is Every 96 Seconds—Make Sure It Isn’t Yours

**Brusly, LA**— You don’t plan for a home fire. That’s the point. It starts small—an unattended pan on the stove, a space heater too close to a blanket, a worn cord under a rug — and then it moves faster than most people can imagine. According to the National Fire Protection Association, in 2024 alone, U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated 329,500 home structure fires, which caused 2,920 deaths, 8,920 injuries, and \$11.4 billion in property damage. On average, a home fire was reported every 96 seconds, and a home fire death happened every three hours.

That’s why the National Association of State Fire Marshals is urging every household to take part in Community Risk Reduction Week (January 19-25, 2026), by doing what works best: reducing risk *before* there’s an emergency.

“Home fires are not random tragedies; they’re often predictable and preventable,” Michael Desrochers, NASFM president and Vermont state fire marshal said. “During Community Risk Reduction Week, we’re asking every American to take a few simple actions that can make the difference between a close call and a catastrophe.”

## What starts home fires and what to do about it

### 1) Cooking: the #1 cause of home fires

Cooking was the leading cause of home fires across the country.

- Stay in the kitchen when frying, grilling, boiling, or broiling. If you leave, turn appliances off.
- Keep combustibles like towels, paper products, packaging, and curtains away from the stove.
- If a small grease fire starts, slide a lid over the pan and turn off the heat. Don’t move the pan and do not use water.

## **2) Heating: peak season risk (and space heaters are the danger zone)**

The National Fire Protection Association reports an annual average of 37,365 home heating equipment fires (2020–2024) causing 417 deaths and \$1.2 billion in damage. Space heaters and heating stoves were involved in 47% of these fires but accounted for 73% of deaths.

- Keep anything that can burn at least three feet from heaters, fireplaces, wood stoves, and furnaces.
- Turn portable heaters off when you leave the room or go to sleep.

## **3) Electrical problems: another top cause of home fires**

In 2023, an estimated 23,700 home fires, and 305 deaths were caused by an electrical malfunction and fire.

- Replace damaged cords; don't run cords under rugs or furniture.
- Plug high-heat appliances directly into a wall outlet, avoid "daisy-chaining" power strips, and never plug a space heater into an extension cord.

## **4) Smoke alarms and Carbon Monoxide Alarms: the simplest step with the biggest payoff**

NFPA research finds nearly three out of five home fire deaths (59%) happened in homes with no smoke alarms (43%) or alarms that failed to operate (16%). When alarms work, the risk of dying in a home fire drops by about 60%.

- Test every alarm once a month.
- Replace batteries (or the whole alarm if it's expired, many are designed to last about 10 years).
- Make sure alarms are installed in the right locations (including sleeping areas and outside bedrooms) and follow the manufacturers' instructions.

## **Make it real: a 10-minute "Home Fire Risk Reset" for Community Risk Reduction Week**

The National Association of State Fire Marshals recommends every household complete these quick steps during Community Risk Reduction Week:

1. Test smoke alarms; fix or replace any that don't sound.
2. Create a 3-foot safety zone around heaters and cooking areas.
3. Set a cooking rule: "If the stove is on, someone is in the kitchen."
4. Make sure space heaters are plugged directly into a wall outlet.
5. Practice a home escape plan with two ways out of each room.

### **About the National Association of State Fire Marshals**

The National Association of State Fire Marshals is the nation's leading organization representing state fire marshals and fire safety officials. The organization works to protect lives, property, and communities through fire prevention leadership, code and standards advocacy, and risk-reduction strategies.

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## SOCIAL MEDIA

Across the country, local fire agencies are sharing ways you can reduce the risk of a fire inside your home. Did you know? On average, a home fire is reported every 96 seconds in the U.S. and every three hours someone dies from a home fire?

Many of these are preventable. This week, we're encouraging Americans to take 10 minutes to do a home fire risk reset by doing the following:

- Test smoke alarms; fix or replace any that don't sound.
- Create a 3-foot safety zone around heaters and cooking areas.
- Set a cooking rule: "If the stove is on, someone is in the kitchen."
- Make sure space heaters are plugged directly into a wall outlet.
- Practice a home escape plan with two ways out of each room.

We know these actions will save lives. Join the Community Risk Reduction movement today!

For More Information Contact:

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### SOURCES:

[NFPA: Fire loss in the U.S.](#)

<https://www.usfa.fema.gov/statistics/>

<https://www.nfpa.org/about-nfpa/press-room/news-releases/2025/us-home-heating-fires-peak-during-winter-months>

[NFPASmoke Alarms in US Home Fires](#)

[Safety with heating equipment | NFPA](#)

