

West Metro Fire Rescue District

Smoking Safety Tips

West Metro Fire Rescue District is asking residents of Crystal and New Hope to follow safety precautions when smoking. If smoking materials are misused they can cause injury and/or death to the occupant or the others in a building. We want everyone to be safe. Smoking is one of the leading causes of large fires that occur in New Hope and Crystal.

Each year, careless smokers start roughly 35,000 home fires. These fires cause more than 1,200 deaths and lead to hundreds of millions of dollars in property loss each year. Smoking is still the leading cause of home fire deaths. Some scary cigarette facts that you should remember: An idol cigarette can reach an ash temperature of 550 degrees after taking a drag it can reach a temperature of 1350 degrees. For reference to show how dangerous this can be wood ignites at 500 degrees with only 10 minutes of exposure.

1. **CHECK FOR HIDDEN EMBERS:** Cigarettes can smolder under the cushions of a chair or sofa, cans, and ashtrays for several hours before igniting. Even ashes in an ashtray or a metal can, can smolder if they are not properly put out. That's long enough for everyone to be asleep before the fire shows itself. Before leaving a room, or balcony where people have been smoking, check in and around furniture, and wood balconies for hot embers, ashes, butts, or matches.
2. **USE ASHTRAYS:** To reduce the risk of cigarettes starting a fire, have plenty of large, deep ashtrays on hand and empty them often. **Fill them with water before dumping cigarette butts into wastebaskets.**

A lit cigarette left in an ashtray is a fire hazard. It can easily ignite butts and as it burns down, it can easily roll out of the ashtray and cause a fire.

3. **SMOKERS NEED WATCHERS:** Never smoke in bed or when you are drowsy. Keep an eye on any smoker who is taking medications that might cause drowsiness. Especially watch anyone who is smoking and drinking. If you are going to smoke on the balcony, have someone double check to make sure the cigarette is out.
4. **DON'T JUST ASSUME THAT FIRE SAFE CIGARETTES WILL NOT START A FIRE. FIRES CAN STILL HAPPEN WITH FIRE SAFE CIGARETTES AND CIGARETTE ASHES.**
5. **DRINKING AND SMOKING IS A DEADLY MIX.**
6. Never use oxygen while smoking.
7. **IF YOU ARE GOING TO BE SMOKING ON A DECK OR BALCONY IN AN APARTMENT BUILDING YOU ARE THE RESPONSIBLE PARTY TO MAKE SURE THAT YOU'RE CIGARETTE AND ASHES ARE PUT OUT!** A little cigarette butt can start a huge fire in an apartment building and put everyone in danger. Even a little cherry piece falling off your cigarette can start a fire.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOU USE A METAL CONTAINER WITH A METAL LID WITH WATER IN THE CONTAINER TO ENSURE THAT ALL ASHES AND CIGARETTE BUTT ARE CONTAINED IN THE CONTAINER.

DON'T JUST FLICK YOUR ASHES OFF A BALCONY OR A CIGARETTE BUTT. IT COULD START A FIRE. You could end up starting your neighbor's balcony on fire. Remember if there is any breeze or a good wind it can get a cigarette that you thought once was out re lit.

We hope these safety tips will help keep you, your loved one, and your apartment building safe from fire. Should you have any questions about fire safety, please contact West Metro Fire-Rescue District at (763) 230-7000.