



CITY OF *Caldwell, Idaho*

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Caldwell Fire Department Calls for Increase Home Fire Safety During COVID-19 Pandemic

Many of us are spending much more time at home amid the COVID-19 Pandemic. This creates an even more essential need to ensure your home is safe for you and your loved ones.

The leading causes of home fires are sparked from everyday items such as cooking, electrical equipment and heating items. In 2018, **27%** of residential structure fires in Caldwell were cause by cooking activities. Overall, fire crews responded to **70** residential structure fires.

It is important to remember, working smoke detectors save lives. Smoke detectors should be located in all sleeping areas, and on every level of your home. They should be tested monthly and batteries changed every six months. Click the link for a video on how to test your smoke detectors.
<https://youtu.be/ZMIHE7UeFTU>

The Caldwell Fire Department wants to share some helpful tips to aid to your fire safety routine:

Cooking

- Stay in the kitchen while you are frying, boiling, grilling, or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove.
- If you are simmering, baking, or roasting food, check it regularly, remain in the home while food is cooking, and use a timer to remind you that you are cooking.
- Keep anything that can catch fire — oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels or curtains — away from your stovetop.
- Make sure all handles are turned inward, away from where someone can grab a hot handle or tip a pan over.
- Be on alert. If you are sleepy or have consumed alcohol, refrain from using the stove or stovetop.
- If you have young children in your home, create a “kid-free zone” of at least 3 feet (1 meter) around the stove and areas where hot food or drink is prepared or carried.

Heating

- Keep anything that can burn at least three-feet (one meter) away from heating equipment, like the furnace, fireplace, wood stove, or portable space heater.

“The Treasure of the Valley”

- Have a three-foot (one meter) “kid-free zone” around open fires and space heaters.
- Never use your oven to heat your home.
- Remember to turn portable heaters off when leaving the room or going to bed.
- Always use the right kind of fuel, specified by the manufacturer, for fuel burning space heaters.
- Install and maintain carbon monoxide (CO) alarms to avoid the risk of CO poisoning. If you smell gas in your gas heater, do not light the appliance. Leave the home immediately and call your local fire department or gas company.

Electrical

- When charging smartphones and other digital devices, only use the charging cord that came with the device.
- Do not charge a device under your pillow, on your bed or on a couch.
- Only use one heat-producing appliance (such as a coffee maker, toaster, space heater, etc.) plugged into a receptacle outlet at a time.
- Major appliances (refrigerators, dryers, washers, stoves, air conditioners, microwave ovens, etc.) should be plugged directly into a wall receptacle outlet. Extension cords and plug strips should not be used.
- Check electrical cords to make sure they are not running across doorways or under carpets. Extension cords are intended for temporary use.
- Use a light bulb with the right number of watts. There should be a sticker that indicates the right number of watts.

Additionally, now is a good time to ensure your home escape plan is up to date, a safe outside meeting location has been established and everyone in your home is familiar with what to do in case of a fire.

The National Fire Protection Association has lesson plans to help with educating children in fire safety with games, stories and more. <https://sparkyschoolhouse.org/>

If you have any questions or concerns during this time, we are here for you. We will be posting safety information on our social media outlets (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter). As always, you can contact us directly at our office 208.455.3032. or our Fire Prevention Officer Lisa Richard at 208.614.9610.