

## **Protect Yourself from Home Fires**

Fires cause an estimated 3,500 deaths and nearly \$4 billion in property damage in the United States. By taking a few precautions, you can prevent your home and family from a devastating blaze.

### **Home heater safety**

- Keep flammables, such as drapes and furniture, away from space and portable heaters.
- Hire a certified chimney sweep to regularly clean and inspect the chimney.
- Inspect heating equipment regularly for proper design, installation and operation.
- Follow manufacturer instructions when installing and filling liquid and gas-fueled heaters.
- Never leave auxiliary heating equipment unattended.

### **Electrical plug safety**

- Don't overload wall outlets.
- Don't use fuses rated too high for your home's circuits.
- Don't use frayed electric cords.
- Don't run extension cords under rugs or furniture.

### **Cooking safety**

- Keep the stove clean and free of grease.
- Keep the handles of pots and pans turned inwards.
- Keep flammable material (including shirt sleeves) away from burners.
- Keep a fire extinguisher rated for grease fires nearby.
- Never store flammable liquids in the kitchen.
- Never leave cooking unattended.

Since most fires start between midnight and 4 a.m., the key to survival is being awake and alert. Working smoke detectors save crucial time in responding to a blaze and also saves lives.

### **Smoke alarm safety**

- Install at least one smoke detector on each floor and one near each bedroom area.
- Check detectors regularly to make sure they are working.
- Change the batteries twice each year. An easy way to remember is to put in fresh batteries when you change the clocks in the spring and the fall.

Contact an Erie Insurance Group Agent for more information about protecting your home, possessions and family from the impact of a devastating fire.