

FIRE SAFETY CHECKLIST

Is Your Apartment Safe?
Steps You Can Take to Prevent Fires



Your Right to a Safe Apartment

Everyone deserves a safe and comfortable place to live. For families living in apartments, this means a building that is kept in good condition through regular upkeep. Unfortunately, not all landlords take this duty to their tenants seriously. There are things you can do to keep your apartment safe, and there are things landlords should be doing, too. Here, you can learn about both.

Fire Safety 101

By spotting fire hazards and bringing fire code violations to your landlord's attention, you can make your home a safer place for your family. To start, be sure your apartment meets basic fire safety standards, which according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development may include:

- Working smoke detectors located outside of sleeping areas and inside each bedroom;**
- Safe electrical outlets and wiring that is not outdated;**
- An accessible fire escape that is not blocked by locked windows or doors;**
- Multiple ways to escape your apartment in case of fire; and**
- Fire extinguishers on the property, inspected regularly.**

These rules may differ depending on your city, county, or state of residence. Contact your city's fire department for the rules your landlord must meet.



Fire Extinguishers

Fire extinguishers are required on the property. Although specific rules about fire extinguishers may differ depending on where you live, in general:

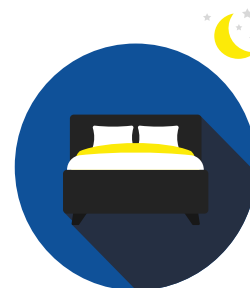
- They must have an inspection tag;**
- Your landlord must have them inspected each year; and**
- You should know where they are located in case of fire.**

Call your city's fire department for the specific rules your landlord must follow.

Smoke Detectors

Housing laws generally require smoke detectors in apartments. According to the National Fire Protection Association:

- They must be installed outside each sleeping area, plus one inside each bedroom;**
- Battery backup should be hardwired for each; and**
- They should be tested once a month.**



If you test a detector and it no longer works, speak to your landlord right away.



In the Kitchen

Most apartment fires occur in the kitchen, and are the leading cause of fire injuries, according to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Make your kitchen a safer place by following these tips:

- Never leave pots and pans on a stovetop unattended;**
- Keep dish towels, oven mitts, and other flammable items away from the stove; and**
- If you have a grease fire, don't put it out with water. Cover the fire or use a fire extinguisher.**

Heating Your Home

It's your landlord's responsibility to provide proper heat, but sometimes they lower the heat in an attempt to cut costs. Other times, your heating system might break, and your landlord never gets around to fixing it. Both cases are unacceptable.

If that happens, make sure you:

- Don't use the oven or stovetop to heat the apartment;**
- Never use portable generators indoors; and**
- Never place a space heater near flammable items or furniture. Be cautious when using space heaters.**

Instead, try these solutions to keep your home warm and safe:

- Install insulation film over windows;**
- Place draft-stoppers under doors; and**



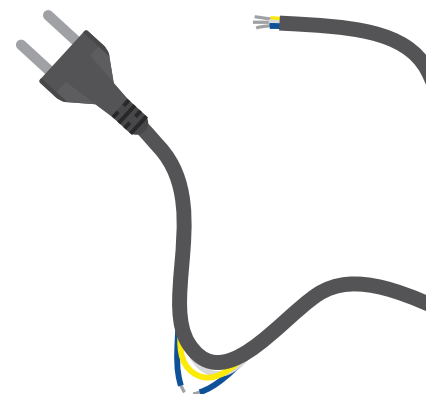
- Install heavy curtains near windows.**

Also, make sure to send a written notice to your landlord right away.

Preventing Electrical Fires

Outdated or faulty wiring can be a serious electrical fire risk. Here are things to remember to avoid fires:

- Only plug one heat-producing appliance — such as a microwave or space heater — into a wall outlet at a time;**
- Never use extension cords with heat-producing appliances;**
- If you see a frayed, cracked, or damaged wire, unplug it and replace it immediately; and**
- Don't overload outlets or power strips with too many electrical devices.**



Hold Your Landlord Accountable for Unsafe Conditions

If you're just moving into a new apartment, make sure to write down any safety violations you see. If you're already living in an apartment and notice that it's not up to code, you don't have to stand for it.

Be sure to document everything, so you can prove your unsafe conditions and show that you requested help. If a negligent landlord fails to fix the problems, and it leads to you and your family [getting injured in a fire](#), you have another option: an attorney.

Our Attorneys Can Help

[Contact us](#) today and we'll help you decide what to do next. You might be entitled to compensation. This is true even if you think the fire was your fault. An experienced attorney will help you with every aspect of the process for seeking justice.

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