

# THE RISK OBSERVER

Safety Information for Residents

## FIRE SAFETY – COOKING AND SMOKING

Thousands of deaths and millions of dollars in property damage are caused by home fires each year. Many people believe “it won’t happen to me”. Following are safety precautions for some of the most common causes of home fires. They are easy to follow and could save your or a loved one’s life.

### Cooking

Cooking is the leading cause of home fires, with most of those occurring on the cook top while frying. Never leave the kitchen while using the cooktop, and **never remove the battery or disconnect a smoke detector.**

- Pay close attention to items baking in the oven. Do not rely on a timer; fire can start well before the timer signals.
- Never cook or barbeque on your patio or balcony.
- Keep the stove surfaces and oven clean. Fire can start by igniting previously spilt food items or built up grease.
- Maintain the counter tops by keeping them free of debris and combustible materials like food wrappers/packaging, cookbooks, towels, oven mitts, etc.
- If fire has started on the stove, in the oven, or in a microwave, unplug or turn off the heat source immediately. Keep the oven door closed.
- Make sure you are not wearing any loosely fitted clothing while cooking.
- Teach children to stay at least 3 feet from the stove/oven at all times.
- Keep pot handles turned inward so you don’t accidentally bump them, and so children can’t grab them.

### Smokeing Materials

- Do not smoke in bed or on furniture when sleepy or on medication that causes drowsiness.
- Keep smoking materials away from anything that can ignite, like paper, plastics, curtains, upholstery, mattresses, etc.
- Use ashtrays that are deep and not easily tipped over.
- Douse cigar and cigarette butts and ashes with water before throwing them into the trash.
- Keep all smoking materials, lighters, and matches from a child’s reach. Make sure guests are aware of this if children are present.
- If your guests smoked while visiting, ensure any butts didn’t fall between cushions or are smoldering in a trashcan.
- Do not flick lit cigarette butts. You don’t always see where they land and they can easily ignite combustible materials, even outside.