



Safety & Security



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Introduction: Importance of Safety

There are many things to consider when moving to a new home or neighbourhood. Although there can be lots of excitement about the move, once settled, it is important to create and share a plan with all members of your home to ensure they know what to do in an emergency. Children will be unfamiliar with their new surroundings and will need to be told what to do and where to go if there is a fire or stranger creating an unsafe environment.

When you become a Habitat Saskatchewan Homeowner, we strongly suggest introducing yourself to your neighbours. This will help you familiarize yourself with the people in your new neighbourhood and help detect if someone is there that doesn't belong. You can also build a relationship that can ultimately result in your kids having a safe place to go in case of an emergency.



Fire Safety

Did you know that if a fire starts in your home, **you may have as little as two minutes to escape?** During a fire, early warning from a working smoke alarm plus a fire escape plan that has been practiced regularly can save lives.

Prevent and Prepare for Home Fires

The 8 Ways to Prepare for a Home Fire:

1. Install the right number of smoke alarms. Test them once a month and replace the batteries at least once a year.
2. Teach children what smoke alarms sound like and what to do if you hear one.
3. Ensure that all household members know two ways to escape from every room of your home and know the designated family meeting spot outside of your home.
4. Establish a family emergency communication plan and ensure that all household members know who to contact if they cannot find one another.
5. Practice escaping from your home at least twice a year. Press the smoke alarm test button or yell "Fire" to alert everyone that they must get out.
6. Make sure everyone knows how to call 9-1-1.
7. Teach household members to STOP, DROP and ROLL if their clothes should catch on fire.
8. Make sure you have a working fire extinguisher, and you know how to use it.

How to protect your home:

- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home and outside every sleeping area.
- Install a carbon monoxide alarm in a central location outside each separate sleeping area.
- Keep matches and lighters up high, away from children, preferably in a locked cabinet.
- Use flashlights when the power is out, not candles.
- Make sure your house number is easily readable from the street, even at night.

How to reduce fire risks in your home:

- Ensure your home heating sources are clean and in working order. Many home fires are started by poorly maintained furnaces or stoves, cracked or rusted furnace parts, or chimneys with creosote buildup.
- Check electrical wiring in the home.
- Fix or replace frayed extension cords, exposed wires, or loose plugs.
- Make sure wiring is not under rugs, attached by nails, or in high traffic areas.
- Make sure electrical outlets have cover plates and no exposed wiring.

- Avoid overloading outlets or extension cords.
- Place rags that are used to apply flammable household chemicals in metal containers with tight-fitting lids.

How to cook more safely:

- Stay in the kitchen when frying, grilling, or broiling food. Stay in the home while simmering, baking, roasting, or boiling food.
- Keep pets off cooking surfaces and countertops.
- Keep the stove area clean and clear of things that can catch fire, such as potholders, towels, curtains, bags, and other appliances.
- If you are cooking and a fire starts in a pan, slide a lid over the burning pan and turn off the burner. Leave the lid in place until the pan is completely cool. Moving the pan can cause serious injury or spread the fire.
- Never pour water on grease fires.

If a Fire Starts:

- Locate your fire extinguisher and use it if you are able and safe to do so.
- Remember to GET OUT, STAY OUT and CALL 9-1-1 or your local emergency phone number.
- Yell "Fire!" several times and go outside right away. Leave all your things where they are and save yourself.
- If closed doors or handles are warm or smoke blocks your primary escape route, use your second way out. Never open doors that are warm to the touch.
- If you must escape through smoke, get low and go under the smoke to your exit. Close doors behind you.
- If smoke, heat, or flames block your exit routes, stay in the room with the doors closed. Place a wet towel under the door and call the fire department or 9-1-1. Open a window and wave a brightly colored cloth or flashlight to signal for help.
- Once you are outside, go to your meeting place and send one person to call the fire department.



Prepare and Practice Your Fire Escape Plan Create a Plan

1. Identify and write down two ways to get out of each room (ex. Door and window).
2. Designate a meeting place, such as a neighbour's yard or a tree down the street.
3. Once outside, call 9-1-1.
4. Photograph your home/belongings for insurance purposes and store the information somewhere you can access even if your house was to burn to the ground.

Practice Your Plan

1. Hold a family meeting to discuss the escape plan twice a year.
2. Check that smoke alarms are properly located and in good working condition.
3. Tell family members to go into the rooms they normally sleep in and shut the door.
4. Push the test button on the smoke alarm.
5. Demonstrate to young children how to get out of the house safely:
 - Crawl along the floor underneath the smoke to exit a room.
 - Check if fire is behind a door (Place your hand on the door; if it is hot, DO NOT open the door. If it is cool, open the door slowly and crawl out.).

6. Stress to children that they should not hide when they hear the smoke alarm. Children should be taught to not to wait for adults, but to get out as quickly and safely as they can.
7. Ensure everyone knows where the family meeting place is located.
8. Once outside, meet with other family members at the designated family meeting place. Do a head count to ensure everyone is out of the house.
9. Remember to share your escape plan with babysitters and long staying visitors.



Community Safety

Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods

On any block in any neighbourhood, it only takes one house that is harbouring illegal activities to undermine the safety of all residents and affect the property values throughout that neighbourhood. The Government of Saskatchewan has programs in place to help residents feel empowered to report illegal activities in their neighbourhoods.

Please keep in mind that no matter where you live, there is the potential for crime to occur and it's best to be aware and prepare. Before you purchase a home from Habitat, understand and research the neighbourhood you are moving into so you can make the best decision for your family. Habitat Saskatchewan has no control over the crime that may happen in your neighbourhood, therefore calling Habitat to try and address your issues is not the right path to take.

Make a Report to SCAN

If you are suspicious of a property in your neighbourhood, do not investigate it yourself or approach the occupants. Please call the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Investigation Unit immediately.

There is an Investigation Unit in Saskatoon, Prince Albert, and Regina. Please see the following phone numbers:

- Regina toll free number: 1-866-51-SAFER.
- Saskatoon and Prince Albert toll free number: 1-855-933-6411.

The information you provide is confidential and you will not be involved in any investigative or court proceedings that may result from your report. No one involved with SCAN can disclose your identity without your consent and the information you provide cannot be used in a way that would disclose your identity.

Signs of Illegal Activity

There are some common signs that illegal activity is taking place in a home or business, particularly if they happen in combination with each other. Here are some things to watch for:

- Frequent visitors, often driving expensive vehicles.
- Frequent late-night activity.
- Blackened windows or curtains always drawn.
- Unfriendly people who appear to be secretive about the activities.
- People watching cars suspiciously as they drive by.
- Heavy home security installations.
- Strange odors coming from the building or garage.
- Garbage that contains an unusually large number of bottles or containers, especially chemical containers.

- Placing garbage in a neighbour's collection area.



When to Call the Police

You would notify your local police station or 911 for the following:

1. If you believe that someone is at imminent risk of physical harm.
2. Life threatening situations.
3. If there is a crime in progress.
4. If you are being threatened by someone and you are in immediate danger.

Every police department has a non-emergency line that you can contact. Non-emergencies would be for things such as general inquiries or looking for police support for noise complaints or reporting thefts.



Home Safety

Is your home safe when you go on vacation? Many people who go on vacation wonder if their house will be safe while they are away. When you go on vacation, the last thing you want is a phone call telling you that your house was robbed or coming back and discovering damage and loss.

Home Safety Tips

Here are some tips for securing your home when you are going on vacation:

1. Before you leave, check every door and window to make sure that everything is locked and sealed. Make sure that you have no spare keys lying around that are “hidden” under a mat or under a rock. Burglars know where to look and a key gives them easy access. If you have a sliding window or door, put a piece of wood or a long metal rod on the track so that it can't be pushed open.
2. Set timers on lights outside of your house and on electronics inside the house. The darker it is outside your house, the more appealing it is going to be for burglars because they cannot be seen. Timers also help give the impression that someone is home.
3. Make sure that your newspapers and mail are picked up or put on hold. If papers and mail are piled up outside your house, it is obvious that someone has not been home for a while.
4. Leave some blinds and drapes open. If your house is completely closed off, it is going to look like no one is there. If you make it appear more normal, it is less obvious that you are away.
5. Arrange to have a trusted family member, neighbour, or friend to check on your home on a regular basis. It is also important to have someone check regularly for home insurance purposes.
6. If you are going away for an extended period of time, call your home insurance provider before leaving. While each insurance company differs, there's a limit to how long your home can be unoccupied and still benefit from the protections of home insurance. As stated above, the best way to prevent this from happening is to have a trusted friend check up on your

home, but that may not be possible in some cases. Your home insurer will let you know what's needed to keep your policy in force.

7. Going on a vacation is an excellent reminder to ensure you have an updated inventory of household goods which may include appliances, jewelry, firearms, and other valued items.
8. If you have any cash, jewelry, or other valuables in your home, take them out and put them in a safety deposit box. It costs money for this service, but it is far better than if someone were to break into your home and find your valuables.

A vacation is supposed to be a relaxing time. There is no reason why you should have to spend time worrying about the safety of your home if you make sure to take the necessary precautions.

Emergency Home Plan Template

The Red Cross offers an emergency home plan template that you can download here that you might find useful or helpful:

<https://www.redcross.ca/crc/documents/How-We-Help/Emergencies-and-Disasters-in-Canada/emergency-plan.pdf>

Safety and Security Checklist

Your home should be a place of safety and comfort, where you and members of your family can enjoy themselves without threat from harm. Of course, maintaining a safe environment takes work and effort.

Therefore, it's recommended you view and utilize this new home safety and security checklist:

<https://www.safewise.com/app/uploads/2021/08/SafeWise-Safety-and-Security-Checklist-for-New-Homes.pdf>