

## Pets and Fire Safety



House fires are often the result of leaving an unattended fire in your fireplace, an unattended candle burning, or accidentally leaving the oven on. Fires affect approximately one half million pets annually, according to the United States Fire Administration. Each year as many as one thousand fires are started by our pets. For example, pets attempting to retrieve food left on the stovetop may bump the knob with their paws, turning the burner on.

National Volunteer Fire Council is encouraging pet owners to take the necessary safeguards to keep their pets safe from fire.

*National Pet Fire Safety Day is July 15* As a responsible pet owner you should use these tips to ensure that your pets will be taken care of in case of a fire-related emergency.

- Remove stove knobs before you leave home or use protective knob covers. The number one household appliance associated with pets starting fires at home is a cook top or stove.
- Use flameless candles, rather than an open flame candle. Cats are well-known for starting fires when their tails knock over lit candles.
- Make sure that any open flame is thoroughly extinguished before leaving home, and that your pet is not left unattended around an open flame. Pets may be curious and investigate flames in a fireplace, candles, or cooking appliances.
- Turn off space heaters when you leave the home. If a space heater is left running too long or is knocked over it can ignite flammable materials.
- Keep collars on pets, and leashes visible near the door in case fire fighters need to rescue your pet. When leaving pets home alone, put them in areas or rooms near entrances where firefighters can easily find them.
- Put a pet alert window cling on a front window, and write the number and kind of pets in the home on it so that firefighters know how many pets are in need of rescuing in case of a fire or other emergency.
- You should test your smoke alarms monthly and replace their batteries annually according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.
- You should have an emergency escape route planned for not only the two-legged family members, but also the four-legged members of the family. This is a critical step for your family and pet's safety. Installing a Hale Pet Door will prevent a pet from being trapped and will allow a quick, [accessible](#) escape route from the flames and smoke of a fire. If your pet is home alone when a fire occurs, a dog door is particularly beneficial. You can take comfort in your pets ability to escape a fire hazard whether you are home or your pets are home alone.
- Enlist the help of a dog obedience trainer to teach your dog to escape through the dog door when the smoke alarm is activated. In the event of an emergency the dog may become confused and scared, so it is important to practice the escape route periodically with your pets.

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