

As tornado season in Texas approaches, the Federal Emergency Management Agency's U.S. Fire Administration and the Flower Mound Fire Department encourage you to use the following safety tips to help protect life and property from the potential threat of fire during or after a tornado. One can greatly reduce the chances of becoming a fire casualty by being able to identify potential hazards and following the outlined safety tips.

SOME TYPES OF FIRE-RELATED HAZARDS PRESENT DURING AND AFTER A TORNADO

- Leaking gas lines, damaged or leaking gas propane containers, and leaking vehicle gas tanks may explode or ignite.
- Debris can easily ignite, especially if electrical wires are severed.
- Pools of water and even appliances can be electrically charged.
- Generators are often used during power outages. Generators that are not properly used and maintained can be very hazardous.
- Alternative heating devices used incorrectly create fire hazards. Proper use and maintenance can decrease the possibility of a fire.
- Appliances that emit smoke or sparks should be repaired or replaced.

CHEMICAL SAFETY

- Look for combustible liquids like gasoline, lighter fluid, and paint thinner that may have spilled. Thoroughly clean the spill and place containers in a well-ventilated area.
- Keep combustible liquids away from heat sources.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY

- Assume all wires on the ground are electrically charged. This includes cable TV feeds.
- Look for and replace frayed or cracked extension and appliance cords, loose prongs, and plugs.
- Exposed outlets and wiring could present a fire and life safety hazard.
- Appliances that emit smoke or sparks should be repaired or replaced.
- Have a licensed electrician check your home for damage.

GAS SAFETY

- Smell and listen for leaky gas connections. If you believe there is a gas leak, immediately leave the house and leave the doors open.
- Never strike a match. Any size flame can spark an explosion.
- Before turning the gas back on, have the gas system checked by a professional.

GENERATOR SAFETY

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions and guidelines when using generators.
- Use a generator or other fuel-powered machines outside the home. CO fumes are odorless and can quickly overwhelm you indoors.
- Use the appropriate sized and type power cords to carry the electric load. Overloaded cords can overheat and cause fires.
- Never run cords under rugs or carpets where heat might build up or damage to a cord may go unnoticed.
- Never connect generators to another power source such as power lines. The reverse flow of electricity or 'backfeed' can electrocute an unsuspecting utility worker.

AND REMEMBER...

- Be careful when using candles. Keep the flame away from combustible objects and out of the reach of children.
- Some smoke alarms may be dependent on your home's electrical service and could be inoperative during a power outage. Check to see if your smoke alarm uses a back-up battery and install a new battery at least once a year.
- Smoke alarms should be installed on every level of your home.
- All smoke alarms should be tested monthly. All batteries should be replaced with new ones at least once a year.
- If there is a fire hydrant near your home, keep it clear of debris for easy access by the fire department.