

HOME AND GARDEN

Less than two minutes to escape a fire

(NC)—Fire is the third leading cause of accidental death in Canada. Test your fire safety IQ on these questions:

You should install smoke alarms:
a. in the kitchen
b. outside the bedrooms
c. on every level in your house

Answer: b and c. The Safety Council of Canada recommends smoke alarms be installed outside each sleeping area and on each level of your home (including the basement).

What are the most common causes of home fires?

- a. Cooking
- b. Faulty electrical wiring
- c. Careless use of matches
- d. Smoking
- e. all of the above

Answer: e. Human inattention or carelessness is behind most home fires. Once the fire has ignited, the furniture in the home generally burns first. The majority of injuries and fatalities from fires are caused by

smoke inhalation from burning furnishings and other contents.

You should replace your smoke alarms:

- a. once a year
- b. every seven to 10 years
- c. every 15 years

Answer: b. It is estimated one out of every three smoke alarms is no longer reliable after 10 years. At least once a year, you should try your alarm to make sure it will still detect smoke.

Wood-frame houses are safer than steel-frame houses in fire situations.

- a. True
- b. False
- c. Neither

Answer: c. While it is true that wood burns and steel doesn't, under a short exposure to heat, steel can quickly lose its structural strength and melt, with the result that roofs and walls may collapse. Wood retains its structural strength under extreme heat for a longer time.

On average, you have 10 to 15 minutes after a fire starts to leave your home safely.

- a. True

- b. False

Answer: b. A fire in a living room can produce life-threatening conditions in a bedroom in two minutes or less.

You should test the battery of your smoke alarm:

- a. every month
- b. every six months
- c. once a year

Answer: a. There are now more homes in North America with smoke alarms that don't work than homes without smoke alarms. The Safety Council of Canada recommends testing the battery every month.

A simple test can ensure pool water remains algae free

(NC) — A pool is for pleasure, a wonderful source of fun and relaxation.

It is simple to ensure safe, sparkling algae free water all summer long — simply test the water.

Always perform the test at the same time of day, before adding any pool products.

New pool owners can develop a testing routine by testing pH and chlorine levels every few days in the beginning.

Once a pattern in your pool water balance is developed, test at least twice a week.

That way you can catch any changes in your water and stop problems before they develop.

Here are some tips for accurate water testing:

➤ Always start with a clean testing vial and fresh reagents.

Rinse test chambers with clean water immediately after each use, and liquid reagents should be replaced at the beginning of each swimming season.

➤ Check the free chlorine levels. Generally, the levels should be between 1.0 and 3.0 parts per million.

➤ Check and adjust the Total Alkalinity.

TA is a measurement of the buffer capacity of your pool water.

Proper TA prevents big changes in pH and helps avoid corrosion and staining.

Different pool finishes require different TA levels. In vinyl, painted and fiberglass maintain 125-150 ppm; for plaster, maintain 80-125 ppm.

➤ Test and adjust the pH. The correct range is 7.4 to 7.6. This is probably the most important test



for your pool. Home testing is reliable, however, it's a good idea to have the pool water checked by a trained pool care professional on a monthly basis during the swimming season.

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