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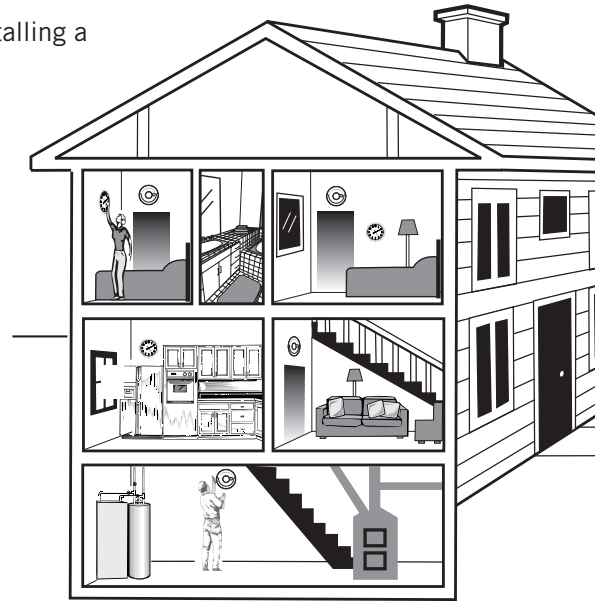
SAFETY TIPS
From Your Building Inspector

The Sound of Safety

What is the most important thing to remember when installing a smoke alarm or carbon monoxide alarm?

Location, location, location!



Smoke Alarm Safety:

- Install at least one smoke alarm in every bedroom, outside of each sleeping room area and on each level of a multi-level building.
- Test each smoke alarm regularly.
- Keep batteries fresh by replacing them annually.
- Check the manufacturer date on your smoke alarm. Consider replacing if it is over 10 years old.

Smoke alarms can't help you unless they are functional and you can hear them. Building safety codes require smoke alarms. Contact your local building safety department for more information.

Carbon Monoxide (CO) Alarm Safety:

- Consider installing a CO alarm in the hallway outside of each sleeping room area.
- Test each CO alarm regularly in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Permanently wired or plug-in CO alarms should have a battery backup. Keep batteries fresh by replacing them annually.

CO alarms can't help you unless they are functional and you can hear them. Building safety codes require CO alarms in all dwelling units that contain a fuel-fired appliance and dwelling units that have an attached garage. Contact your local building safety department for more information.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

AMRINDER SINGH
DIRECTOR OF CODE ENFORCEMENT
BUILDING CODE OFFICIAL

Borough of Steelton, PA
Office of Code Enforcement
123 North Front Street
Steelton, PA 17113
Phone: 717-939-1146
Fax: 717-831-0095

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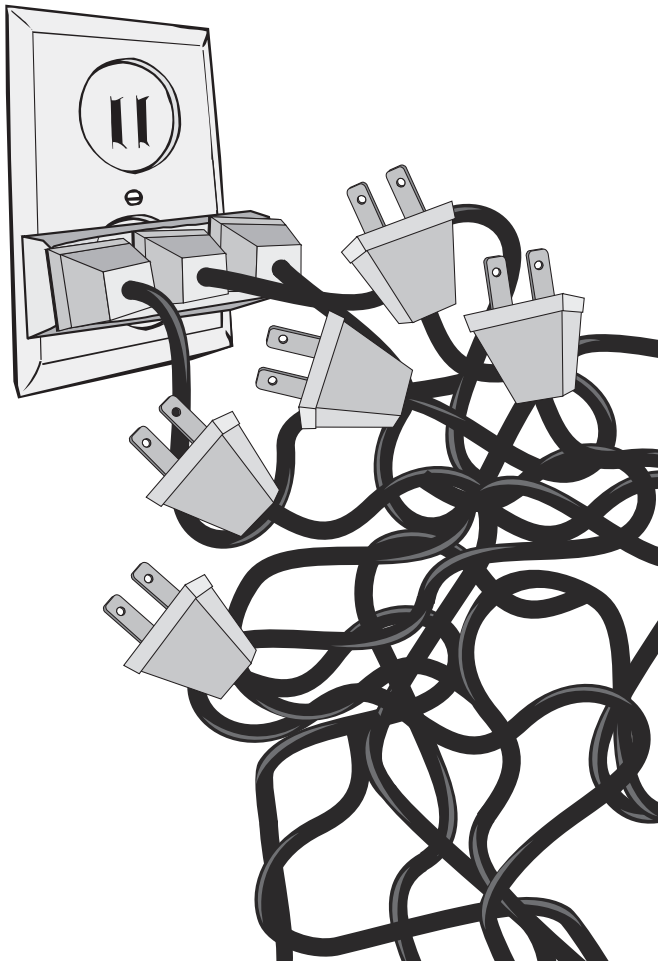
SAFETY TIPS
From Your Building Inspector

Don't Let Electrical Cords Create a Danger in Your House!

Overloaded receptacle outlets and undersized electrical extension cords can cause a fire or electrocution danger.



Use Electrical Cords Safely:

- Never overload electrical cords or power strips. Electrical cords and power strips have a designated load capacity. Be sure the total amount of energy used by appliances and lights plugged into the cord or strip does not exceed that capacity.
- Use only listed power strips that have integral overload protection and have been tested by a product safety laboratory.
- Don't use appliances that have damaged cords.
- Extension cords should not be used as a substitute for permanently wired receptacle outlets.

Electrical cords must be the proper wire size for the load they serve. Overloaded cords will become hot and can start a fire. Avoid permanent use of extension cords. Appliance cords and extension cords are susceptible to physical damage from foot traffic, furniture, house pets, swinging doors and many other causes so protect them from damage. Contact your local building safety department for more information.

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DIRECTOR OF CODE ENFORCEMENT
BUILDING CODE OFFICIAL

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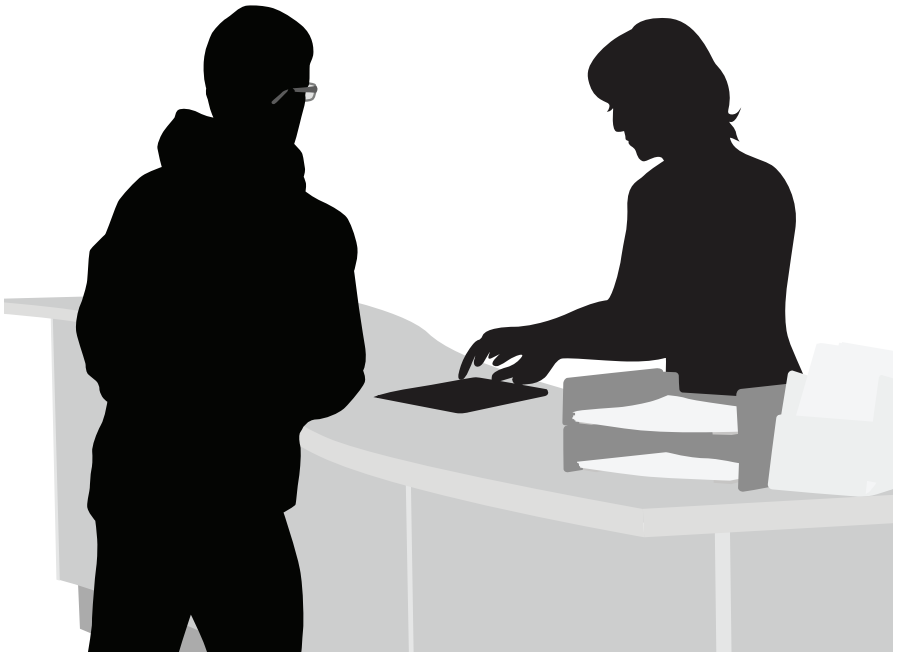
SAFETY TIPS
From Your Building Inspector

Do I Need a Permit for My Home Project?

Check with your local building safety department before beginning home-improvement projects. Requirements vary, but many building safety departments require permits for home-improvement projects, including electrical, mechanical, structural or plumbing work. As a result of getting a permit, an inspector will check the work. Inspections provide a measure of safety to protect your life and property.



Projects That Usually Require Permits:

- Re-roofing
- Installing electrical outlets
- Replacing windows
- Remodeling kitchens or bathrooms
- Installing a pool, spa or hot tub
- Building an addition, including seasonal rooms
- Installing appliances and replacements such as furnaces, boilers, water heaters, fireplaces and space heaters
- Building a tall fence

If you are planning to make home improvements, contact your local building safety department to find out what building safety code provisions apply in your area and if you need a permit.

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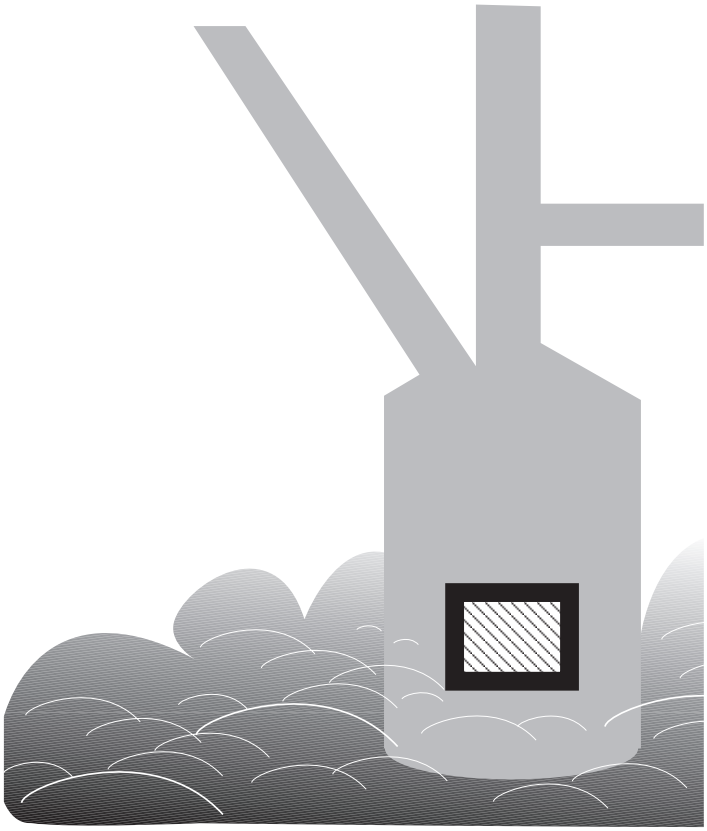
SAFETY TIPS
From Your Building Inspector

Don't Let Your Gas Appliances Starve for Air!

Gas appliances, such as water heaters, furnaces and boilers, need plenty of air to operate safely. Otherwise they will produce excessive, deadly carbon monoxide. Carbon monoxide is odorless, colorless and toxic, which means you can't see, taste or smell it. It causes headaches, dizziness, disorientation, nausea and fatigue. Carbon monoxide can kill, so be sure to maintain your gas appliances.



Safely Operate Your Gas-Fired Appliances:

- Schedule an annual appliance inspection, cleaning and tune-up by a qualified specialist.
- Have vents and chimneys inspected by a qualified expert at least once a year.
- Have a technician check the combustion air provisions for your appliances.
- Store combustibles and flammables far away from gas appliances.

Building safety codes require specific venting requirements and combustion air provisions for gas appliances to ensure safe operation. Contact your local gas company or building safety department for more information.

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SAFETY TIPS
From Your Building Inspector

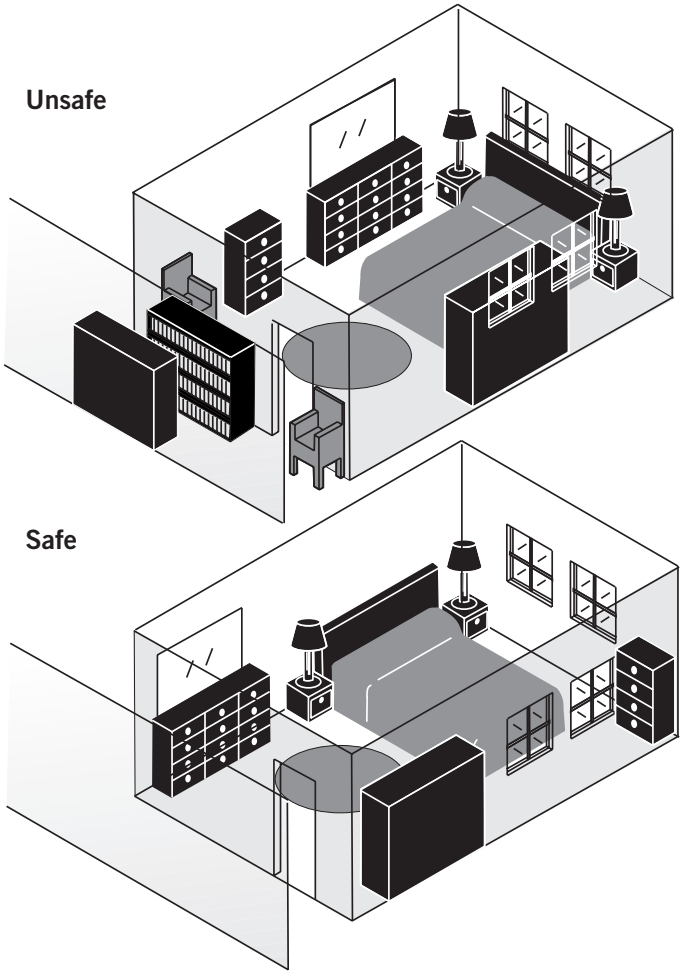
Make a Safe Exit

During a home emergency, such as a fire, it's important that all occupants are able to get out—and emergency personnel are able to get in—as quickly and easily as possible.

Safe Exit Paths and Passages:

- Keep hallways clear of obstructions.
- Do not block or obstruct emergency escape windows and exit doors.
- Make sure all family members know how to unlock and open windows and doors.
- Be sure window security bars release from the inside in case of emergency.
- Develop and practice a fire escape plan.

According to the U.S. Fire Administration, it takes less than 30 seconds for a small flame to burn completely out of control and turn into a major fire. Within minutes, a house can fill with thick, black smoke and become engulfed in flames. Building safety codes designate minimum window and hallway sizes to allow occupants to get out in case of emergency, and provide access for first responders to get in. Contact your local building safety department for more information.



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