Smoking fire safety tips, for both indoors and out
Prevention is easy with a bit of forethought

Smoking materials are responsible for many preventable fires. Every time you light a cigarette, you potentially increase the risk of an unintended fire.

While accidents do happen, smoking-related fires are almost always preventable with a bit of caution and forethought. Consider the following tips if you're a smoker, if you have a smoker living in your home, or if you have a business or property where smoking happens.

The fire danger is changing
As more people have moved outside to smoke, there's been a shift in smoking-related fires from indoors to outdoors. Instead of the sofa or bed catching fire, fires in planters on balconies or decks have been a growing concern. In dry conditions, it doesn't take much more than a butt tossed off a balcony or from a vehicle window to start a grassfire that could potentially affect an entire community. Smoking outdoors may reduce risks inside, but it comes with a new set of risks outside.

Stubbing out safely
The best way to extinguish your cigarette is in a non-combustible container filled with a non-combustible material. That could be sand in a metal bucket, a can, or in a glass jar. The biggest thing to remember is that planters or flower pots are NEVER a safe place for cigarette butts. The soil in planters or pots often contains material that can burn or smoulder for hours. You could think you've successfully stubbed out a cigarette in the morning, only to have the back of your house fully engulfed in flames by the afternoon. Sand in an empty can is cheap and easy. Replacing a home is not.

Cannabis and fire safety
While cannabis and tobacco burn differently, there are still similar risks associated with having any burning, smouldering product in your home. Always have ashtrays on hand, and be careful to keep matches or lighters away from children.

Medical oxygen and smoking
If you're using medical oxygen, you shouldn't be smoking, and neither should anyone else in your home. Medical oxygen saturates hair and fabrics – including clothing, bedding and furniture – so even if you turn off the oxygen temporarily, the severe fire risk will remain. The same ban applies to candles and any other open flame, as the additional oxygen in your home's air can have unexpected effects on any flame, and the heat and intensity of oxygen-fed fires can be fatal. If you have allowed smoking in your home in the past, put signs on your doors warning people as they enter that smoking is no longer allowed because of the extreme risk of fire and burns due to the presence of medical oxygen.