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**Looking for a New Home? Don’t Forget Fire Safety!**

House hunting season will soon be upon us. While you’re looking at paint colors, carpeting, and the condition of the swimming pool, be sure to check the fire safety of the home you are considering. When you get close to making an offer, hire a certified home inspector who can check that the home is up to code and help identify potential hazards. However, you can do some checking yourself before the inspection and offer.

This checklist will help you determine the home’s fire safety. Keep notes and discuss your concerns with your realtor and be sure to consider these concerns when determining the offer price.

**Does the home have smoke alarms?** Check to see if the alarms are battery-operated or hardwired. Laws vary by state, but most newly constructed homes (generally built after 1994) must have [hard-wired smoke detectors throughout](http://www.ncsl.org/research/environment-and-natural-resources/smoke-and-carbon-monoxide-alarms-codes.aspx). Battery-operated detectors are permissible for older homes. If you have questions, double-check with your builder or city fire marshal. Test the alarms when doing a walk through. Do they appear to be old? Are they covered with dust, grease or dirt? There are many factors that can affect the ability of the device to function as designed.

**Are home fire sprinklers present**? A home fire sprinkler system is the best protection a home can have from the ravages of fire. A residential sprinkler system is easy to maintain and may afford you a discount on your homeowner’s insurance. You can find out more about home fire sprinklers at [homefiresprinkler.org](https://homefiresprinkler.org/).

**Is there a fireplace or heating stove?** Take a good look inside! Is the fireplace clean? Are the bricks and flue in good condition? An inspector will check the chimney for you when the time comes, but you can tell a lot by the condition of the fireplace. Same goes for a wood, coal or pellet stove. Check for any missing parts or excessive creosote buildup in the stove. Good maintenance is essential not only for fire safety, but for heating efficiency. If the stove looks like it needs replacing, or the fireplace needs repair, these are points for you to consider and discuss with your realtor.

**How’s the fuse box?** Outdated wiring is one of the leading causes of electrical fires. Take a look at the home’s fuse box and make sure circuit breakers are all in good working order and no loose or missing breakers are present. Outdated breaker boxesoften have worn connectors that do not work, causing the system to overload and start an electrical fire.

**Is the furnace in good condition?**Furnaces last an average of 18-20 years, depending on regular professional maintenance. Check to see if the furnace has been inspected. Most professional inspecting services will leave a dated tag once inspection is complete. Make sure it is running quietly and no smoke or odors are emitting from the unit.

Remember, no matter how great the hardwood flooring and new kitchen appliances look, a home that was not properly maintained to reduce the risk of fire may be more trouble than it’s worth.

**Insert your Department name** relies on brave men and women to volunteer their time to serve as volunteer firefighters to ensure that every call for help is answered. Men and women with almost every skill set are needed. To learn more about volunteer opportunities, please contact **Insert your Department name at Insert website** or call **Insert your Dept. phone number**.

There are volunteer opportunities at your local volunteer fire department for citizens willing to work hard. To learn more about becoming a volunteer firefighter and joining your local volunteer fire department, please visit [www.VolunteerFireTN.org](http://www.VolunteerFireTN.org).

***About the Tennessee Fire Chiefs Association, Inc. (TFCA)****The TFCA provides leadership to career and volunteer Fire Chiefs, Chief Fire Officers and managers of emergency service organizations throughout the State of Tennessee through vision, information, education, service and representation to enhance their knowledge, skills, and abilities. The TN Fire Chiefs Association (TFCA) also encourages the professional advancement of the fire service to ensure and maintain greater protection of life and property from fire and natural or man-made disasters. The TFCA’s mission is to provide leadership to career and volunteer chiefs, chief fire officers, and managers of Emergency Service Organizations throughout the State of Tennessee through vision, information, education, service and representation to enhance their professionalism and capabilities. More information about the TFCA is located at* [*www.tnfirechiefs.com*](http://www.tnfirechiefs.com) *.*

***About Volunteer Workforce Solutions (VWS)****The Tennessee Fire Chiefs Association was awarded a SAFER recruitment and retention grant in 2016 and partnered with the* [*International Association of Fire Chiefs*](https://www.iafc.org/about-iafc/positions/position/iafc-position-human-dignity) *to identify recruitment and retention goals, strategies and marketing methodologies that would benefit not only participating departments, but all fire departments in the state. 19 departmental groups, consisting of 64 departments, were selected to participate in Phase I of the program. The VWS program is also operating in Virginia through the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association and Connecticut through the Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association. There is also currently a National VWS effort focusing on diversity and new trainings. More information about the Tennessee VWS can be found at* [*www.VolunteerFireTN.org*](http://www.VolunteerFireTN.org)*.*

*(Insert info about your department in similar format to above)*