

CITY OF MUSCATINE



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FIRE SAFETY TIPS FOR THE BASEMENT AND THE GARAGE

Be aware of dangerous chemicals, equipment in basement and garages

MUSCATINE, Iowa – Basements and garages present additional fire safety risks compared to other home areas. Flammable liquids, storage of combustibles, gas appliances, and electrical tools can lead to fires.

The National Fire Incident Reporting System notes that garage fires tend to spread farther and cause more injuries and dollar loss than fires that start in all other areas of the home.

The [U.S. Fire Administration](#) recommends the following.

In the basement:

Be sure to install a smoke alarm in the basement, and connect to other smoke alarms in your home if possible. Test the alarm monthly and clean as needed. If you have oil-, gas-, or wood-burning equipment in the basement you should also have a carbon monoxide alarm installed.

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Maintain easy, quick access to your fuse box or circuit breaker panel. Keep burner access doors on gas water heaters and gas furnaces closed to prevent flames from escaping and starting a fire.

Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from the furnace, oil burner, wood stoves, water heaters, and other heat-generating equipment. Keep oily rags in airtight containers and away from heat sources. Trash should not be stored in the basement. Keep stairs free of clutter and safe for quick exit in an emergency. Washers and dryers should be plugged directly into wall outlets. Clean lint filters every time you use the dryer. Clean the dryer vent ductwork every year.

In the garage:

Store oil, gasoline, paints, propane, and varnishes in a shed away from your home, and keep items that can burn on shelves away from appliances. Plug only one charging appliance into an outlet, and do not use an extension cord when charging an appliance.

Safety through construction includes a 20-minute fire-rated door that is self-closing and self-latching from the garage into the house, a ceiling made with 5/8-inch type X gypsum board (or the equivalent) if you have living space above the garage, a wall with ½-inch gypsum board (or the equivalent) if the wall attaches the garage to the home, an attic hatch if you have attic access from the garage, and a heat alarm (not a smoke alarm) that will sound if the temperature rises too high.