Product safety tips

Smoke alarms
Smoke alarms may allow you sufficient time to reach safety by providing early warning in the event of a fire. Many people have neglected to install smoke alarms despite their life-saving potential and low cost. Even those who do have smoke alarms forget that they need some maintenance attention to continue working properly. UL offers the following tips for purchasing and maintaining smoke alarms.

Purchase a smoke alarm with the UL Mark
Smoke alarms are available at nearly all hardware, department and discount stores. When you purchase a smoke alarm, look for the UL Mark on the product as well as on the packaging. The UL Mark tells you that a representative sample of the smoke alarm has been evaluated by UL according to nationally recognized safety requirements.

Photoelectric and ionization type alarms
There are two types of smoke alarms available today: photoelectric and ionization. While photoelectric smoke alarms generally respond faster to smoldering smoke conditions and ionization smoke alarms generally respond faster to flaming fire conditions, both types provide adequate protection against fire. Combination smoke alarms featuring both photoelectric and ionization technology are also available.

Safety in numbers
Install at least one smoke alarm on each floor of the house or residence and outside all sleeping areas. Some fire safety advocates recommend installing smoke alarms inside each sleeping area if sleeping with the door closed.

Smoke alarm maintenance
Working smoke alarms are needed in every home and residence. Test and maintain your smoke alarms at least once a month unless otherwise noted by manufacturer instructions. Smoke alarms most often fail because of missing, dead or disconnected batteries. Replace the batteries at least once a year.

Fire escape planning
Develop a fire escape plan and practice it at least twice a year. In the event of a fire, know at least two ways out. Stay as close to the floor as possible during your escape as hot air and smoke rise to the ceiling and air nearest the floor will be safer to breathe. If you encounter a closed door during your escape, feel the door before opening it. If it is hot to the touch, use another exit. The heat could indicate fire on the other side of the door.

Designate a well-lit place that is a safe distance away where everyone will meet in the event of a fire. This will help firefighters determine if anyone else is still inside. Never return to a burning building for any reason.