

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Melissa Propp RN, Clinic Manager, 308-345-4223

Fire Prevention Week Focuses on Safe Charging

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) encourages residents to prevent injury or death from house fires by learning safe charging tips for Fire Prevention Week. According to FEMA, Nebraska had 33 injuries per 1000 fires in 2023 which was higher than the national average of 20 injuries per 1000 fires.

“The National Fire Protection Association says it best with their theme for this year - Charge into fire safety. Safe charging is a superpower,” explains Cathy Strudle, Emergency Response Coordinator for SWNPHD. “With all of today’s rechargeable items and the reports of fires because of charging them, it is a good time to focus on some safety tips to protect you and your family.”

Here are some tips straight from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA):

- Cheap Charger, Don’t Chance it: Use the cord and charger that came with your device or one approved by the manufacturer.
- Soft Surface, Hard Pass: Charge on a hard, flat surface like a table, desk, or bare floor.
- Fully Charged, Time to Unplug: Unplug your device when it is fully charged.
- For Tools and Rides, Charge Outside: Charge large items like e-bikes, scooters, and power tools outside when possible. Do not block exits when charging.
- Feels Hot, Stop Using It: Stop using your device if it feels very hot, starts to swell, smells strange, leaks, smokes, or makes popping or hissing sounds.
- On a Flight, Keep It in Sight: When on a plane, keep devices where you can see them while charging. Do not charge e-cigarettes or vapes on the plane. Tell a flight attendant if you notice a problem with your device.

“Fire prevention is more than changing batteries and conducting fire drills,” continues Strudle.

“It’s important to maintain your fire alarms, smoke detectors, carbon monoxide alarms, and fire extinguishers. And it is just as important to think about charging your electronics safely.”

For more information visit www.nfpa.org or usfa.fema.gov/prevention/home-fires. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. You can follow SWNPHD on Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram, or visit our website at swhealth.ne.gov.

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