Home Fire Audit

DON'T GIVE HOUSE FIRES A CHANCE

SAMPLE

RESIDENTIAL FIRE SAFETY REPORT

A four-bedroom home in Sammamish

PREPARED FOR
Sample household

SCOPE
Whole home, inside and out

AUDITOR
M. Boath

7	18	10	21
CRITICAL	MODERATE	MINOR	STRENGTHS

This is an illustrative sample. The property, the household and the findings are examples of what an audit produces, not a record of any actual home. A visual, point-in-time fire-risk walkthrough. Not a code inspection, not a guarantee, and not a substitute for evaluation by a licensed electrician, chimney professional or HVAC technician where noted.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At a glance

7

CRITICAL

Address these first. Three of the seven are free.

18

MODERATE

Contributing factors, mostly cheap or free to fix.

10

MINOR

Worth knowing. None of these is urgent.

21

STRENGTHS

Things already being done well, and worth keeping.

THIRTY-FIVE ITEMS WERE FLAGGED. THEY CLUSTER INTO FIVE THEMES.

Alarm coverage has aged out	All four bedroom alarms reach the end of their service life together, and the room with the fireplace has none.
Two bedrooms cannot be escaped by a child	The upper window locks sit out of a child's reach. This costs nothing to fix.
Suppression is in the wrong room	Both extinguishers are in the kitchen and one is the wrong class. The garage, which holds the propane, the solvents and the battery chargers, has none.
The deck is the most concentrated outdoor risk	The fire pit itself is well handled. What surrounds it is not.
Leaving the house is not yet the plan	The stated intention is to collect documents on the way out, and the escape equipment that exists is stored in the garage.

THE SHORT VERSION

Several things here are being done well, and the fire pit stand in particular shows more thought than we usually see.

Three of the seven Critical items cost nothing to fix. A household escape plan now exists where none did before.

Nothing in this report requires you to stop using any part of your home.

YOUR ACTION PLAN

Do this first

Today

FREE

- [ ] Switch to the lower window lock in bedrooms 2 and 3
- [ ] Reseat the loose battery in the bedroom alarm
- [ ] Clear the paper towels and bottle from beside the burners
- [ ] Move the B:C extinguisher from the kitchen to the garage
- [ ] Move the propane cylinder outdoors
- [ ] Roll the rug and cushions back from the fire pit
- [ ] Empty the ash vacuum outdoors
- [ ] Clear the mop and ironing board away from the water heater

This week

UNDER $250

- [ ] Replace the four bedroom smoke alarms and add one in the living room
- [ ] Add a carbon monoxide alarm in the hall
- [ ] Add a fire blanket within reach of the cooktop

This month

BOOK IT

- [ ] Book an electrician for the panel: unpermitted work, filler plate, labelling
- [ ] Book a chimney sweep
- [ ] Have the closer on the garage door repaired
- [ ] Choose a fire-rated document safe, so there is nothing worth going back for

This season

HABIT

- [ ] Wheel the grill out from under the patio cover before lighting it
- [ ] Charge tool batteries only while someone is home and awake
- [ ] Walk the escape plan with the whole household, once in daylight and once after dark
- [ ] Clear the gutters, and cut the shrubs back from the first five feet
- [ ] Move the firewood off the back wall

1 – 2 OF 7

Critical findings

CRITICAL

1 Every bedroom smoke alarm is at the end of its service life

ALL FOUR BEDROOMS · LIVING ROOM

WHAT WE SAW

All four bedroom alarms carry a manufacture date of October 2017, which puts them at the end of a ten-year service life. Each sounded on test, but one has a battery pack that is not fully seated. The living room, which has the wood-burning fireplace, has no alarm; the nearest is in the hall.

WHY IT MATTERS

Alarms are replaced ten years from manufacture because the sensor degrades on its own schedule, whether or not the alarm has ever sounded. All four reach that limit together. Almost three in five home fire deaths happen where there was no smoke alarm, or none that worked.

WHAT TO DO

Replace all four bedroom alarms together and add one in the living room. Ten-year sealed units remove the battery cycle. Interconnected models mean that when one sounds, the whole house hears it.

SOURCE NFPA 72 — placement, and replacement ten years from manufacture. NFPA, Home Structure Fires (2025)



Bedroom alarm, made October 2017

2 Two bedroom windows cannot be opened by a child

BEDROOMS 2 AND 3

WHAT WE SAW

The upper window locks in bedrooms 2 and 3 sit about six feet from the floor. Both work correctly for an adult. Neither can be reached by the child who sleeps in the room. Bedroom 2's sash is also stiff in its track.

WHY IT MATTERS

Two ways out of every room is the core of escape planning. In these two rooms the second way out exists for an adult, but not for the person who sleeps there.

WHAT TO DO

Use the lower lock and leave the upper one open: the window stays secure and a child can release it. Work bedroom 2's sash until it runs freely. Both rooms are at ground level, so no ladder is needed.

Free to fix. About a minute per window.

SOURCE NFPA public education, Escape Planning — two ways out of every room



Upper window lock, measured from the floor

3 – 4 OF 7

Critical findings, continued

CRITICAL

3 The electrical panel has three separate problems

BEDROOM 3

WHAT WE SAW

Recent electrical work was carried out without a permit. One breaker position has no filler plate. A framed picture hangs partly over the panel, in a child's bedroom. No scorch marks were seen; the panel was viewed from the outside only.

WHY IT MATTERS

Unpermitted work is not necessarily unsafe, but nobody has reviewed it. A missing filler plate is an open hole in an energised panel. A picture over it blocks access and puts something that burns against an electrical enclosure.

WHAT TO DO

One visit from a licensed electrician covers all three: review the unpermitted work, fit the filler plate, and label the circuits. Take the picture down today.

SOURCE Scope boundary — RCW 19.28. We observe the panel exterior; diagnosis and repair are licensed work



Electrical panel, partly behind a framed picture

4 Both extinguishers are in the kitchen, and nobody has been shown how to use one

KITCHEN · GARAGE

WHAT WE SAW

Two extinguishers, both in the kitchen. The white one is rated 10-B:C — flammable liquids and electrical only. The red ABC unit is correctly rated and its gauge reads in the green. The garage holds a propane cylinder, solvents and two battery chargers, and has no extinguisher. Nobody in the household had been shown how to use one.

WHY IT MATTERS

A B:C unit is not rated for paper, wood or fabric, which is most of what burns in a kitchen. The garage is where the liquid fuel is, and it has nothing to put a fire out with.

WHAT TO DO

Move the B:C unit to the garage and mount it by the door, where its rating matches the fuel. Keep the ABC unit in the kitchen, on the exit side of the stove. We went through pull, aim, squeeze, sweep with the household before leaving.

SOURCE NFPA 10 — Class A ordinary combustibles, B flammable liquids, C electrical



The two kitchen extinguishers

5 – 6 OF 7

Critical findings, continued

CRITICAL

5 Paper and plastic within a foot of the burners, in a kitchen that cooks with hot oil

KITCHEN

WHAT WE SAW

A roll of paper towels, a plastic bottle and a wooden utensil holder all sit within about twelve inches of the gas burners. High-heat oil cooking is routine here. The household did not know that water must never go on an oil fire, and no lid or fire blanket is kept within reach.

WHY IT MATTERS

Cooking is the leading cause of home fires and of home fire injuries. Water on burning oil flashes to steam and throws the oil out of the pan. That one rule is the most useful thing for this kitchen to know.

WHAT TO DO

Clear the burner surround. Keep a lid that fits the frying pan on the counter while you cook, and add a fire blanket within reach but not above or behind the stove. For a pan fire: lid on, heat off, and leave the pan where it is.

SOURCE NFPA public education, Cooking Safety. NFPA, Home Structure Fires (2025)



Oil heating on the gas cooktop

6 The fire pit barrier is right. What surrounds it is the problem.

REAR DECK

WHAT WE SAW

The pit sits on a steel stand about three inches high, over a heat-resistant pad on the composite deck. Immediately around it are a synthetic outdoor rug, a wooden chair and synthetic-covered cushions.

WHY IT MATTERS

The stand and pad deal with heat travelling down into the boards, and they do it well. They do nothing about embers, which leave a wood-burning pit sideways and land on whatever is nearest. Synthetic textiles ignite quickly and burn hot.

WHAT TO DO

Clear a margin around the pit before lighting it: roll the rug back and move the cushions out of ember range. Nothing needs replacing. The fix is the footprint around the pit.

SOURCE Composite decking manufacturer guidance (Trex) — a heat barrier is required beneath a wood-burning fire pit



Fire pit on its steel stand and heat pad

7 OF 7

Critical findings, continued

CRITICAL

7 The plan is to leave after collecting documents

WHOLE HOME

WHAT WE SAW

Asked what would happen if the alarm sounded at night, the plan described was to collect the box of important documents from the filing cabinet first, and then a few things from a safe if there was time. Smoke hoods and a go bag are owned, but both are kept in the garage.

WHY IT MATTERS

That puts two errands between the alarm and the door. In UL's testing a living room with modern furnishings reached flashover in under four minutes, against almost half an hour for the same room furnished a generation ago. Nothing in a house lets you judge whether smoke is survivable.

WHAT TO DO

A fire-rated document safe, so there is nothing worth going back for and the decision disappears. Move the go bag onto an exit route. And the rule for everyone in the house: you do not assess the air, you leave.

SOURCE NFPA public education — get out and stay out. UL Fire Safety Research Institute — modern and legacy room comparison



Important documents, kept in a filing cabinet

THE PLAN YOU NOW HAVE

MEETING POINT	THE SEVEN-YEAR-OLD	THE TWO-YEAR-OLD	THE DOG	TWO WAYS OUT
Across the street, by the mailbox	Leaves with one named adult	Carried out by the other adult	Hides under a bed if frightened. Tell the crew, and do not go back in	Confirmed for every room once the window locks are switched

1 – 6 OF 18

Moderate findings

MODERATE

	FINDING	WHERE	WHAT TO DO	SOURCE
☐	**Propane cylinder stored in the garage**	Garage	Move it outdoors, upright and away from doors and windows. Leaked propane is heavier than air and pools at floor level in an enclosed space.	IFC §6109 / NFPA 58
☐	**Oily rags left balled up on the workbench**	Garage	Lay them flat outdoors to dry before throwing them out, or keep a lidded metal can. Rags carrying stain or oil can heat themselves and ignite with no spark.	OSHA — oily waste containers
☐	**Dust collector canister is full**	Garage	Empty it. A sealed canister of fine wood dust is the accumulation that gets missed, and it sits beside the tools that make sparks.	Observation
☐	**Tool batteries left charging overnight**	Garage	Charge them while someone is home and awake. The bench itself is right: hard, clear and away from the door.	NFPA public education, Lithium-Ion Battery Safety
☐	**Door from the garage does not close on its own**	Garage	Adjust or replace the closer so the door shuts and latches by itself. It is the barrier between the house and where the fuel is kept.	IRC R302.5.1 (2018) — self-closing, self-latching door
☐	**Plant, basket of throws and log carrier within three feet of the fireplace**	Living room	Move all three back to clear three feet from the firebox opening. The canvas log carrier belongs off the hearth between loads.	NFPA public education, Heating Safety — three feet clear

7 – 12 OF 18

Moderate findings, continued

MODERATE

	FINDING	WHERE	WHAT TO DO	SOURCE
☐	**Ash vacuum stored beside the hearth, and full**	Living room	Empty it outdoors and keep it away from the fireplace. The vacuum itself is the right kind: metal, lidded and made for ash.	Chimney Safety Institute of America
☐	**Chimney inspection is now due**	Living room	Book a sweep. It was last swept just over a year ago, and annual inspection is the published standard.	NFPA 211 — annual inspection
☐	**AV receiver running inside a closed cabinet**	Living room	Leave the cabinet doors open while it is on, or vent the back panel. The top of the unit was hot to the touch.	Manufacturer ventilation clearances
☐	**No stove knob covers**	Kitchen	Fit covers, or lift the knobs off when nobody is cooking. There is a two-year-old in the house.	NFPA public education, Cooking Safety — a three-foot kid-free zone
☐	**Appliances have never been checked for recalls**	Whole home	Search each model number at cpsc.gov/recalls. It takes about ten minutes, once.	U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission
☐	**Space heater plugged into a power strip**	Bedroom 4 (office)	Plug it straight into the wall. The heater itself is a good one, with a tip-over cut-off, and it is only used while the room is occupied.	NFPA public education, Heating Safety

13 – 18 OF 18

Moderate findings, continued

	FINDING	WHERE	WHAT TO DO	SOURCE
☐	**Heating pad left plugged in on the bed**	Primary bedroom	Unplug it after use and store it flat rather than folded.	Manufacturer instructions
☐	**Mop and ironing board against the water heater**	Laundry	Clear the space. A mop head rests on the tank and the ironing board stands within a foot of the burner compartment.	Manufacturer clearance-to-combustibles labelling
☐	**No carbon monoxide alarm outside the bedrooms**	Hall	Add one in the hall. The house has a wood-burning fireplace, a gas cooktop, a gas water heater and an attached garage.	NFPA 72 — carbon monoxide detection
☐	**The children have not walked the escape plan**	Whole home	Walk it once with both children in daylight, then once after dark. Include checking a door for heat before opening it.	NFPA public education, Escape Planning
☐	**Gas grill used under the patio cover**	Patio	Wheel it out before lighting. It sits close to the house wall with the cover about five feet above the lid, and it is already on wheels.	NFPA public education, Grilling Safety
☐	**House number is hard to read from the road at night**	Exterior	Fit numbers that contrast with the wall and are lit or reflective. Dark bronze on a dark wall disappears after dusk.	IFC §505.1 — address visible from the street

None of these is urgent on its own, and most cost little or nothing. Tick them off as you go.

MODERATE

10 ITEMS

Minor findings

	FINDING	WHERE	NOTE
☐	**Two power strips chained from one outlet**	Bedroom 4 (office)	Run each strip from its own wall outlet.
☐	**Alarms are not interconnected**	Whole home	Worth choosing interconnected units when the bedroom alarms are replaced.
☐	**No fire-resistant gloves with the fireplace tools**	Living room	The tongs are there. Add a pair of gloves to the set.
☐	**Oven mitts kept in a drawer across the kitchen**	Kitchen	Hang them within reach of the stove.
☐	**Lint at the outside dryer vent flap**	Exterior	Brush it out a couple of times a year. The duct itself is short and clear.
☐	**Solvent shelf beside the parking bay**	Garage	Correctly stored on a metal shelf. Shift it clear of where the car parks.
☐	**Extension cords piled on the pressure washer**	Garage	Coil and hang them.
☐	**Shrubs within five feet of the house**	Exterior	Healthy and green. Cut them back from the first five feet as they are pruned.
☐	**Firewood stacked against the back wall**	Exterior	Move the stack away from the wall before the dry season.
☐	**Leaves and needles in the gutters**	Exterior	Clear them the next time the ladder is out.

Worth knowing, and worth fixing when it is convenient. None of these needs action this month.

MINOR

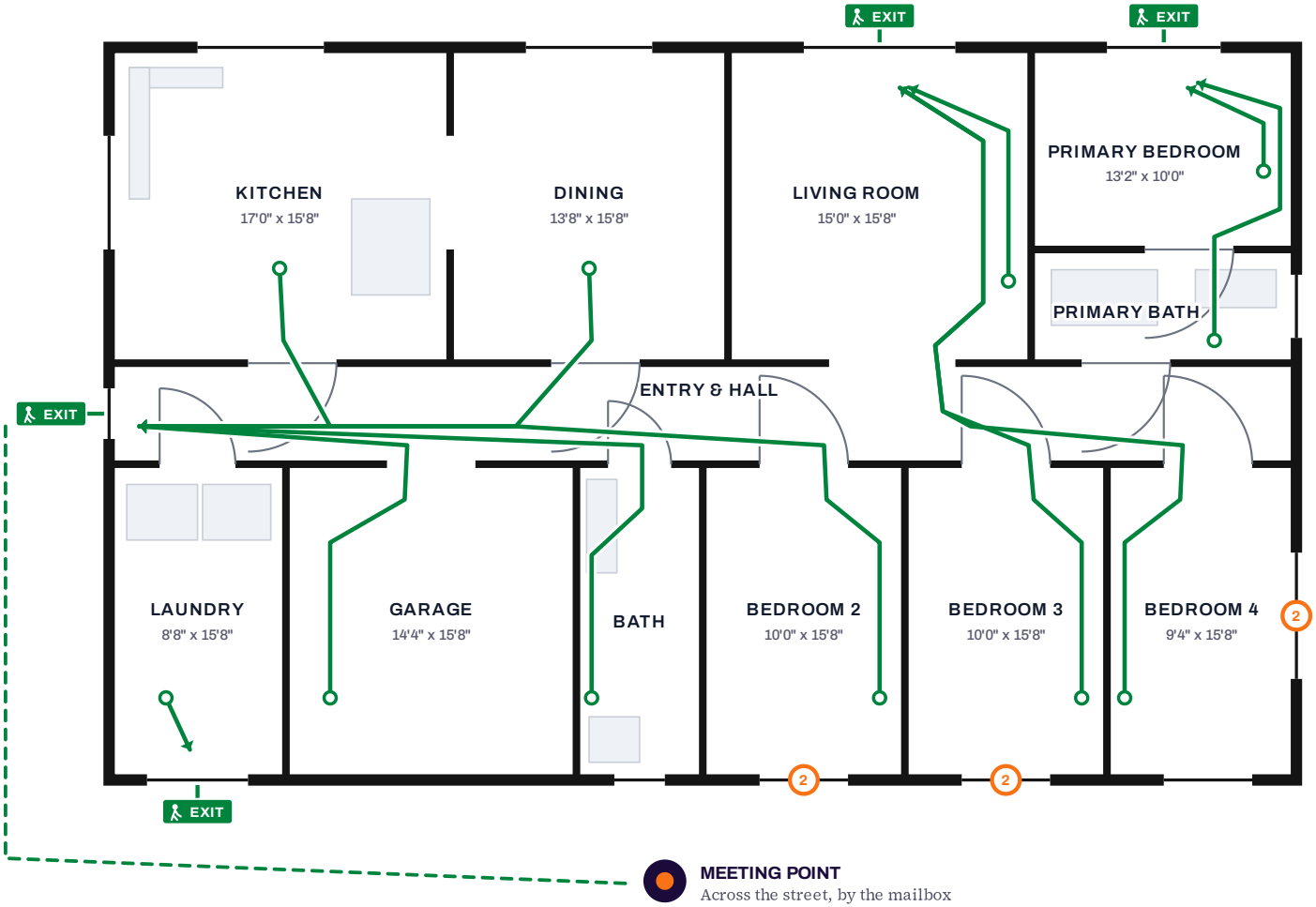
21 STRENGTHS OBSERVED

What this home already gets right

- The fire pit stand and heat pad. On a composite deck that is a considered solution, and most households do nothing at all.
- Ash is left to cool for more than a week before removal, and only ever lifted with a purpose-built metal ash vacuum.
- Damper, spark screen and log grate all present, sound and working.
- The fire is never left burning overnight.
- The hearth extends the full sixteen inches in front of the firebox.
- Pot handles turned inward, away from the counter edge.
- The gas shut-off location is known to both adults.
- No smoking indoors.
- The hall alarm is new: ten-year sealed, and it sounded on test.
- No gas odour anywhere, and the combustible gas detector stayed silent throughout.
- The dryer duct is short, rigid metal and free of kinks.
- No security bars or fixed screens on any bedroom window.
- No gasoline or fuel cans stored in the garage.
- Paints and solvents kept on a metal shelf, away from the water heater.
- No dead or dry vegetation against the house.
- Attic and foundation vents are screened.
- Side gates open without power and were unlocked.
- Grill hose, regulator and tank connection all sound.
- Responsibility for each child was assigned without hesitation during the escape conversation. Most households have never made that decision.
- Everyone old enough to be asked knows to stay low in smoke.
- The dog's usual hiding place is known, which is what lets a crew find an animal without anyone going back inside.

ESCAPE PLAN

Your evacuation map



Route out of each room

EXIT Way out — four in this house

2 Second way out — bedroom window

Outside meeting point

Two ways out of every room. Bedrooms 2 and 3 only have a usable second way out once the lower window lock is in use. See Critical finding 2.

SCOPE AND REFERRALS

What sits outside a visual audit

Inside the electrical panel	We look at the panel from the outside. Opening it, testing circuits and diagnosing faults is licensed electrical work.
The chimney flue	We check the firebox, damper and hearth. Sweeping and inspecting the flue belong to a certified chimney sweep.
Gas appliances and gas lines	We note visible condition and clearances. Servicing, leak testing and repair belong to a licensed technician.
Attic and crawlspace interiors	Viewed from the hatch only.
Concealed ducts	We check both ends of the dryer and range hood ducts. Cleaning the run between them is a duct-cleaning service.
Behind finished surfaces	Wiring, framing and insulation inside walls and ceilings cannot be seen, and we do not open them.
Code compliance	This is a risk assessment. It is not a code inspection and it does not certify anything.

WHERE WE STOP

We are a visual, advisory service. Where something needs a licensed trade, we say so plainly and tell you which one.

Nothing on this page was found to be a problem in this home. It is simply what a visual audit cannot tell you.

Referral contacts for this report: Electrician · J. Doe, Example Electric, (425) 555-0114 · Chimney sweep · R. Roe, Sample Chimney Services, (425) 555-0127 · Heating · A. Poe, Example Heating & Air, (425) 555-0139. We take no fee from any of them.

COSTS YOU NOTHING

Free resources available to you

Some of what your home needs is already covered by programmes you have paid for. We have no financial relationship with any of these and receive nothing for pointing you at them.

Eastside Fire & Rescue — Wildfire Safe Eastside home assessment

A wildfire-focused assessment of your property with a written report. It covers ground we deliberately do not duplicate.

King Conservation District — wildfire mitigation cost-share

Reimburses a large share of qualifying mitigation work. Worth a call before you pay for vegetation work out of pocket.

IBHS Wildfire Prepared Home

A national home-hardening designation. Useful as a standard to aim at, whether or not you pursue the designation itself.

Washington State Fire Marshal — Community Risk Reduction

State-level public education material, free to any household.

WHAT WE WOULD BUY

Our recommended products page. Unaffiliated — we earn nothing from any link on it.

homefireaudit.com/recommended

YOUR ANNUAL RETURN VISIT

A re-check of everything flagged here, alarm tests, and an evacuation drill with the whole household.

We will be in touch as the date approaches.

HOME FIRE AUDIT

If you remember nothing else

Three habits that hold in any household — whatever the house looks like, and whoever is in it.

1

If you light it, time it.

Candle, fire pit, gas fireplace, stove. Nearly every fire that gets away started with something somebody meant to come back to. Set the timer when you light it, not afterwards.

2

Close the door when you sleep.

In UL's testing, rooms behind a closed door averaged under 100 °F while open rooms passed 1,000 °F. It costs nothing, it works every night, and you already own the door.

UL FIRE SAFETY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

3

Get out and stay out.

Low under the smoke, straight outside, and nothing in the house is worth coming back in for. Call from the pavement and tell the crew what is still inside.

Home Fire Audit
homefireaudit.com · info@homefireaudit.com

Home Fire Audit provides visual-only risk assessments and consulting. We do not perform trade repairs or municipal code certifications, and we do not guarantee immunity from fire hazards. A trading name of Boath Industry Ventures Group LLC.