



Migros Aid
REFUGEES | IMMIGRANTS

Life Skills Curriculum: Home & Home Safety

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Home & Home Safety:

Introduction

There is a lot that comes with renting or owning a house or apartment.

It is important to know how to:

- Be safe inside the house or apartment
- Take care of the house or apartment
- Use the appliances inside of the house or apartment

In this guide we talk about different things to know when living in an apartment or house in the U.S.



Home & Home Safety:

Activity Checklist

Which topics are you interested in learning about?

- ☐ Appliance Safety
- ☐ Cleaner Safety
- ☐ Housing Problems
- ☐ Doing laundry

Are you interested in other housing/home safety topics?

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Home & Home Safety:

Glossary

Terms	
Appliance	A machine that does a specific task (such as a refrigerator or oven)
Smoke detector	A device that alerts the people in the apartment or home if there is a fire with loud beeping.
Grease fire	A fire that starts when cooking grease or oil gets very hot.
Emergency	A dangerous situation that needs immediate action.
Dishwasher tabs	Small discs of detergent that clean dishes in the dishwasher. Not safe to eat.
Oven mitts	Gloves or pads that protect your hands while touching hot food (like food in the oven)
Chemicals	Different substances that make up cleaners. Not safe to eat or get in eyes.

Home & Home Safety:

Glossary

Terms	
Tenant	Person paying rent to live in a house or apartment.
Landlord	Person who owns a house or apartment and collects rent from tenants.
Dryer lint	Pieces of clothing that fall off in the dryer and gather in the dryer vent. Buildup of dryer lint can cause a fire.
Stain	A mark on clothing or fabric.
Laundromat	A place to pay to do laundry.
Laundry detergent	Cleaner for clothes and fabrics.

Home & Home Safety

Which picture goes with each word?



Appliance

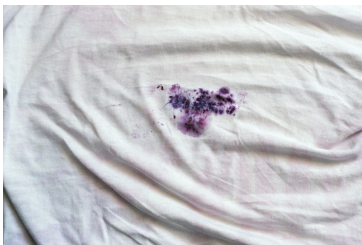
Stain



Dryer lint



Smoke
Detector



Grease fire



Dishwasher
tabs



Oven mitts



Chemicals

Home & Home Safety

Activity 1: Home Safety

Goals & Objectives:

1. Understand how to stay safe while using kitchen appliances.
2. Identify 2 ways to put out a grease fire.
3. Demonstrate checking the smoke detector.
4. Name the most important emergency number to know and how to ask for an interpreter.

Needed materials:

- A device to access linked worksheets
- Access to a kitchen with at least 1 appliance
- Access to a smoke detector
- Access to cleaning products

Home & Home Safety:

Activity 1: Home Safety

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Resources and discussion.....	25-26

Conversation Questions: (Switchboard, 2019, p. 1)

1. What do you already do to keep yourself (and your family, if applicable) safe at home?
2. What has not worked for you with staying safe at home?
3. What might work for you for your situation now with home safety?

Home & Home Safety:

Activity 1: Home Safety

Do you have any questions about home safety?

Home safety is:

- Knowing how to use home appliances in a way that prevents injury and damage
- Knowing what to do if there is an emergency
- Storing chemicals in a way that prevents injury (especially to children)

Why is home safety important?
Are there other parts of home safety not listed above?

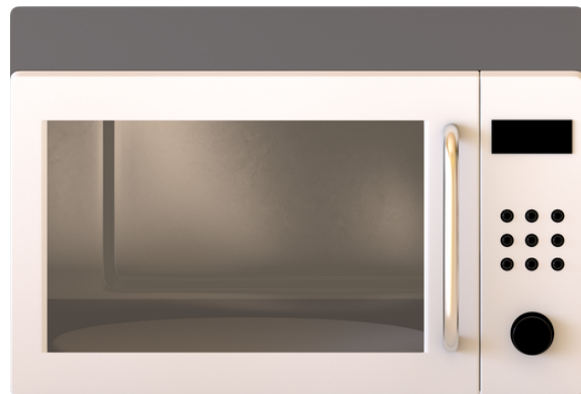
Home & Home Safety:

Activity 1: Home Safety

Do you have any of the appliances below?



Toaster



Microwave



Dishwasher



Stove/Oven

What are some things that you already do to stay safe while using these appliances?

Home & Home Safety:

Activity 1: Home Safety

Activity:

- Go through the appliances below. Discuss safe practices for using each appliance that you have.
 - The answer keys for the appliance safety questions are at the end of the Home guide.
- If using the appliance is new for you, go through the steps of how to use the appliance with your mentor.
- Talk about general safety practices for each question
 - For example: when discussing the question about removing bread from the toaster with a fork, address the bigger question- should you ever put any type of metal in the toaster?

Home & Home Safety:

Activity 1: Home Safety

Toaster Safety



Are these things safe to do with a toaster?

- ____ Putting bread in the toaster. Removing the bread with your fingers once it is cool enough to touch.
- ____ Getting bread out of the toaster using a fork.
- ____ Putting non-food items into the toaster.
- ____ Keeping the toaster away from the sink and other areas close to water.
- ____ Trying to remove a stuck object while the toaster is plugged in.

Home & Home Safety:

Activity 1: Home Safety

Microwave Safety



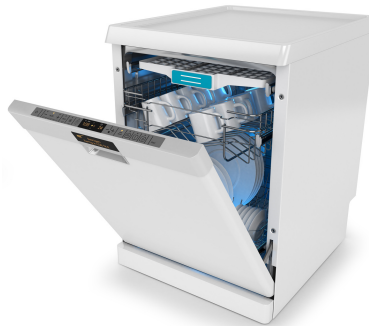
Are these things safe to do with a microwave?

- ____ Putting a metal spoon into the microwave in your bowl of soup.
- ____ Microwaving leftovers on a plate for 1:30 minutes.
- ____ Placing Styrofoam or plastic containers in the microwave for 3 minutes.
- ____ Microwaving an egg.
- ____ Covering your food with a paper towel while microwaving.

Home & Home Safety:

Activity 1: Home Safety

Dishwasher Safety



Are these things safe to do with a dishwasher?

- Putting glass plates on the bottom shelf in the dishwasher.
- Using dish soap in the dispenser.
- Storing dishwasher tabs or detergent in a high cabinet or a cabinet with a lock where children cannot reach them.
- Opening the dishwasher while it is running.
- Mixing dishwasher detergent with other chemicals.
- Touching hot dishes when the washing cycle finishes.

Home & Home Safety:

Activity 1: Home Safety

Dishwasher Use: If using a dishwasher is new for you, here is how you use it:

1. Place dishes in the dishwasher. Reusable plastic containers go on the top shelf and dishes (such as ceramic and glass) go on the bottom shelf. There is a special place for utensils so that they do not fall through while washing.
2. Place dishwasher detergent or tabs in the dispenser. Make sure the dispenser lid closes.
3. Close the dishwasher and choose your washing cycle. A normal cycle works for most dishes.
4. Do not open the dishwasher while it is washing.
5. Be careful, the dishwasher and dishes will be hot right when the cycle is done!



**Do not eat
tabs**

Home & Home Safety:

Activity 1: Home Safety

Stove Safety



Are these things safe to do on the stove?

- ____ Leaving the burner on when there's nothing on the burner.
- ____ Cooking food in a skillet on the stove.
- ____ Keeping flammable items next to the stove.
- ____ Leaving a skillet handle facing over the edge of the stove.
- ____ Checking that all burners are turned off after cooking.
- ____ Using water to rinse a skillet with hot grease.

Home & Home Safety:

Activity 1: Home Safety

Oven Safety



Are these things safe to do with the oven?

- ____ Keeping the oven door open to heat the house.
- ____ Using metal or glass baking dishes in the oven.
- ____ Moving the racks without an oven mitt after heating the oven.
- ____ Using oven mitts to remove a hot dish.
- ____ Leaving your home while food is cooking in the oven.

Home & Home Safety:

Activity 1: Home Safety

Activity:

Pick one of the appliances that we talked about.

Practice making food using the safety guidelines that we talked about.

What questions do you have about appliance safety?

Home & Home Safety:

Activity 1: Home Safety



Grease fire



A grease fire is a fire that starts from cooking oil or grease. If the oil gets hot enough, it can start a fire.

This can happen on stoves or in ovens.

If a grease fire starts, do not try to put it out with water.

Put out the fire with a fire extinguisher or baking soda.



**Do you have baking soda
and/or a fire extinguisher?**

Home & Home Safety:

Activity 1: Home Safety

Smoke Detectors

Discuss:

- Where is your smoke detector?
- Do you know how to check if the smoke detector is working?
- Do you know how to change the smoke detector batteries?
- Should you ever turn the smoke detector off?



To check your smoke detector, press the button on the front. It should make a sound. If it does not make a sound, it needs new batteries.

Home & Home Safety:

Activity 1: Home Safety

Smoke Detectors

The smoke detector needs a new battery if:

- It does not make a sound when you press the button, or
- It is making a chirping noise

If your smoke detector needs new batteries and you are renting an apartment or house, tell your landlord.




If you need to change your own batteries, watch [this video](#) to learn how to change the smoke detector battery. You will need a 9-Volt battery, which is marked with "9V."



Home & Home Safety:

Activity 1: Home Safety

There are 4 kinds of product hazards:
(ReWA, 2022, p.33)

Toxic or poisonous Can cause sickness or death	
Flammable Can catch fire	
Corrosive Can burn body and/or items	
Reactive Mixing some chemicals can create fumes that cause sickness or death, explosions, or fire (See activity below for examples)	

Poison Control Number: 1-800-222-1222

Call this number if someone gets dangerous chemicals in or on their body.

You can request a translator when you call.

Home & Home Safety:

Activity 1: Home Safety

Product Safety

Activities

- Find where your cleaning products are stored, if it is safe to do so, and find the symbols on the bottles.
- Access a list of chemicals not to mix ([here](#)) and review.
- Write down a list of important phone numbers, or put the numbers as contacts in your phone.

Discussion

- Do you have any products with the symbols shown above?
- Do you have any other products with symbols that are not listed?
- What do the symbols on your bottles mean?
- Think about safety- can children access the products where they are now? If so, how could you remove the potential of childhood access?

Home & Home Safety:

Activity 1: Home Safety

Emergencies

What number should you call if there is an emergency?

Discuss:

What are some emergencies that 911 should be called for?

What are some times when 911 should not be called?

Practice calling 911 and asking for an interpreter, if needed, using [this worksheet](#).



Home & Home Safety:

Activity 1: Home Safety

What questions do you have about home safety?

Are any of the safety principles that we went over different from your experience in your country of origin and/or protection?

For more activities and information on home safety, use these resources:

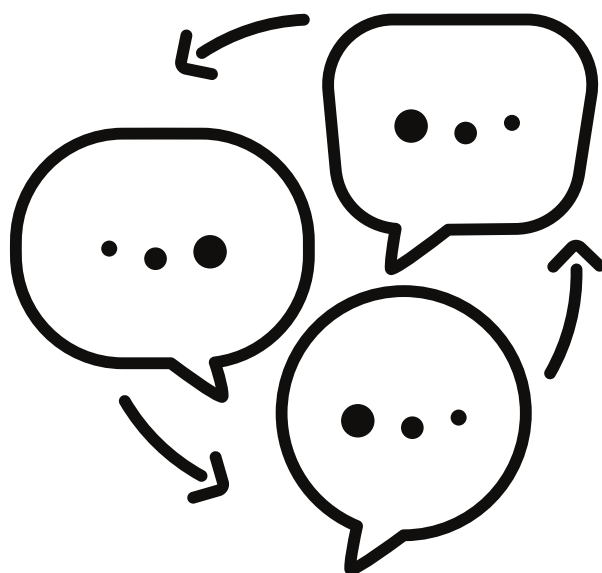
- CORE's "Making Your Way: Reception and Placement Curriculum" ([here](#)) housing rights and responsibilities game, pages 213-239
- Complete the "Housing" module on the SettleIn app (available as a [desktop version](#) or on a mobile device in the app/Google Play store)

Home & Home Safety:

Activity 1: Home Safety

Ending Discussion:

- What should you never put in the toaster?
- What is the emergency number?
- How can you ask for an interpreter when you call the emergency number?
- What is important to know about reactive chemicals in cleaning products?
- How can you put out a small kitchen fire?



Home & Home Safety

Activity 2: Housing Problems

Goals & Objectives:

1. Identify 3 landlord responsibilities.
2. Complete a role play of telling the landlord about a problem.
3. Identify 3 renter responsibilities.
4. Practice telling the landlord about a problem.

Needed materials:

- (optional) Printed activity pages and writing utensil

Home & Home Safety:

Activity 2: Housing Problems

Contents:

Introduction.....	27-28
Link to ReWA lesson and instructions.....	29
Ending discussion.....	30

Conversation Questions: (Switchboard, 2019)

What has worked for you before with taking care of problems that come up in your home?

What has not worked for you with this?

What might work for you for your situation now?

Home & Home Safety:

Activity 2: Housing Problems

For this activity, please go through the information and complete the discussions/activities in the **housing problems lesson** on **pages 20-29**, linked [here](#).

(From the "Housing" Module in the ReWA Life Skills Curriculum)

The lesson addresses:

- Rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants
- Different types of housing problems
- How to tell your landlord about housing problems



Home & Home Safety:

Activity 2: Housing Problems

What questions do you have about housing problems?

What is something that you learned?



Home & Home Safety

Activity 3: Laundry

Goals & Objectives:

1. Name what is most important for you in your laundry process (for example, time/convenience, money, smell, having children help, etc.)
2. Identify how to choose a setting on the washer and dryer, if applicable.
3. Identify how to start the setting on the washer and dryer, if applicable.
4. Demonstrate how to remove lint from the dryer, if using a dryer.

Needed materials:

- If going to laundromat: money for machines
- Detergent
- Clothing or fabrics to wash
- (Optional) Dryer sheets
- (optional) Laundry basket or container
- (Optional) Stain remover and cloth/brush

Home & Home Safety:

Activity 3: Laundry

Contents:

Steps to doing laundry.....	33
Sorting laundry.....	34
Treating stains.....	35
Washing clothes.....	36-39
Drying and folding clothes.....	40-44
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Conversation Questions:

Where do you do laundry?

How do you usually clean your clothes?

Do you already like your way of doing laundry?

Is there any part of doing laundry that is not working for you or that you want to learn more about?

Home & Home Safety:

Activity 3: Laundry

Steps to doing laundry:

1. Sort clothing by color.
2. Pre-treat stains before washing, if you would like.
3. Place one load of laundry into the washing machine (enough clothes to fill the machine).
4. Add laundry detergent (liquid, powder, or pod) to the drum or the dispenser, depending on the washer.
5. Choose the wash setting that you want to use (most loads are okay with the normal setting or the quick wash setting)
6. Let the washer run the wash cycle.
7. Transfer clothing to the dryer. You may want to hang up some clothing to dry depending on your preference.
8. Add a dryer sheet to the dryer, if you would like.
9. Choose the dryer setting that you want to use (most loads are okay with the normal setting or permanent press).
10. Fold and store clothing.

Home & Home Safety:

Activity 3: Laundry

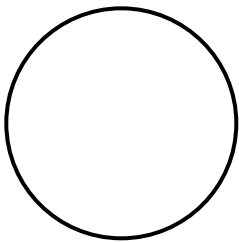
Do you have a way that you already like to sort your laundry?

Is there a different way that you would like to try?

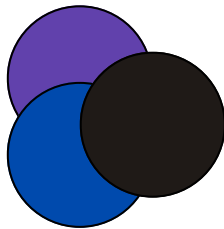
Step 1: Sort clothing and fabrics

Sometimes, people choose to sort their clothing. This can help avoid mixing colors and damaging fabrics.

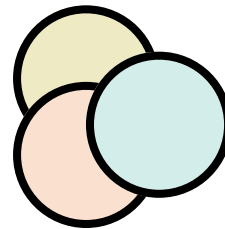
If you would like, you can sort by color:



Whites



Dark Colors



Light Colors

You could also sort by type of item:



Heavy fabrics



Towels



Sheets/linens

Home & Home Safety:

Activity 3: Laundry

Do you have a way that you already like to remove stains from clothing?
Is there a different way that you would like to try?

Step 2: Pre-treat stains

Some people choose to use products to remove stains from clothing. There are different ways that you can remove different stains.

Some products remove a lot of different stains. There are some examples of stain removers [here](#).

Apply a stain remover to the stain before placing the fabric in the washer and rub with a brush or cloth. If the stain does not come out after washing, try to remove the stain again. If you put the fabric in the dryer with the stain, it will make the stain stay in the clothing.

Home & Home Safety:

Activity 3: Laundry

Step 3: Add clothing to the washing machine.

At a laundromat, you will need to pay to use the washer with coins. Usually you can convert bills to coins at the laundromat.

Place coins in the washer after adding clothing and detergent and before choosing the washing cycle.

Try not to overfill the washer so that the clothes have enough room to move around.






Home & Home Safety:

Activity 3: Laundry

Do you already use a detergent that you like?
Is there a different type that you would like to try?

Step 4: Add detergent.

There are different types of detergent that you can use. Here are some different options:

Liquid Detergent	Measure liquid in the cap. Follow washer instructions (either pouring into machine or dispenser).	
Powder Detergent	Measure detergent with scoop. Follow washer instructions on where to put powder.	
Detergent Pods	Add pods directly to the washer (the outside will dissolve). These are typically more expensive.	

Home & Home Safety:

Activity 3: Laundry

Step 5: Choose your wash setting.

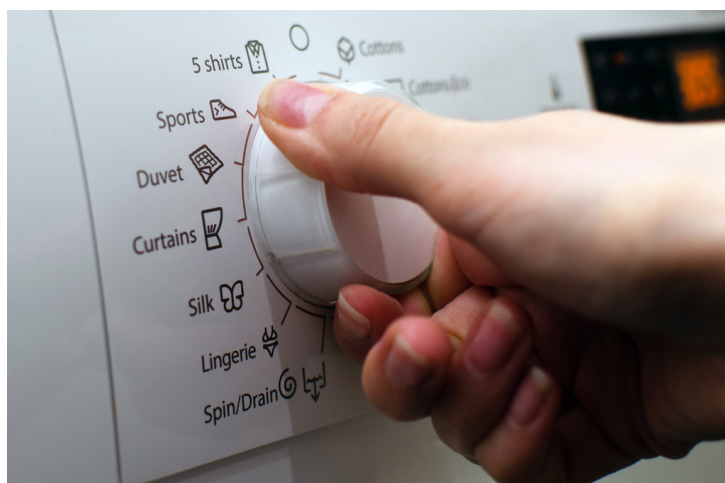
This will decide how hot the water gets, how fast the drum moves, and how long the cycle is.

Cold water will prevent clothing colors from bleeding.

A high spin will help get more water out of clothes and will lower the dryer time.

Most loads can be washed on a normal setting with cold water and a high spin.

Here is a picture and article with more information on washing cycles.



Home & Home Safety:

Activity 3: Laundry

Step 6: Start the washer and let it run.

Some washers start in different ways. Sometimes you pull the knob out and sometimes you push a button, for example.

Find the way to start the machine that you are using.



Home & Home Safety:

Activity 3: Laundry

Step 7: Transfer clothing to the dryer or hang up clothing.

Once the washer is finished, it is time to dry the clothing.

Some people like to hang up certain fabrics or types of clothing to avoid shrinking or damaging them in the dryer.

Hanging clothes to dry can also save money by reducing dryer use. You can hang dry clothes outside with a clothesline, or inside with a drying rack.



Home & Home Safety:

Activity 3: Laundry

Step 8: Use a dryer sheet now, if you want to.

Some people like to use dryer sheets, but you do not have to.

Dryer sheets help prevent clothing static. Sometimes they also add a nice smell to clothing.

If you want to use one, add one dryer sheet directly to the dryer with the clothes.



Home & Home Safety:

Activity 3: Laundry

Steps 9: Choose your dryer setting.

If you would like to use a dryer, transfer your clothing from the washer to the dryer.

If you are at a laundromat, you will need to pay to use the dryer like you did for the washer.

Choose the setting that you would like to use and start the dryer.

Most clothing can be dried on a normal setting.

Here is a graphic for more information about dryer settings.



Home & Home Safety:

Activity 3: Laundry



Important!



Before you dry clothes in a dryer, take out the lint trap, remove the lint from the trap, and throw the lint away.

Lint buildup can start a fire, so it is important to remove.

When your dryer cycle is done, remove the lint again.



Home & Home Safety:

Activity 3: Laundry

Step 10: Fold and put away clothing and fabrics whatever way you like to.



Home & Home Safety:

Activity 3: Laundry

A lot about doing laundry depends on personal preference. It is most important to do laundry in the way that you like and that works well for you to keep your clothes clean.

Activity:

Practice doing a load of laundry with your mentor from start to finish. If you don't have a lot of time, practice what you would do for each step.

Conversation Questions:

How did the laundry task go?

Where there any parts of the task that you liked?

Where there any parts that you didn't like?

Are there any parts of doing laundry that you would like to practice again?

Do you have any questions about doing laundry?

Resources

For more activities and information on housing and home safety, use these resources:

- CORE's "Making Your Way: Reception and Placement Curriculum" ([here](#)) housing rights and responsibilities game, pages 213-239
- Complete the "Housing" module on the SettleIn app (available as a [desktop version](#) or on a mobile device in the app/Google Play store)
- ReWA's "housing" module of their Life Skills Curriculum has information regarding how to lease an apartment or house and how to find a place to live (linked [here](#))

References

Refugee Women's Alliance. (2022). *Life skills curriculum: Beginning level: Housing*. <https://www.rewa.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Housing-Beginning-Level.pdf>

Switchboard. (2019). *Demystifying strengths-based services: Fostering refugees' resilience in resettlement*. <https://switchboardta.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Information-Guide-Demystifying-Strengths-based-Services.pdf>

Appliance Safety Answer Keys

Are these things safe to do with a toaster?

__Y__ Putting bread in the toaster. Remove the bread with your fingers once it is cool enough to touch.

__N__ Getting bread out of the toaster using a fork.

__N__ Putting non-food items into the toaster.

__Y__ Keeping the toaster away from the sink and other areas close to water.

__N__ Trying to remove a stuck object while the toaster is plugged in.

Are these things safe to do with a microwave?

__N__ Putting a metal spoon into the microwave in your bowl of soup.

__Y__ Microwaving leftovers on a plate for 1:30 minutes.

__N__ Placing Styrofoam or plastic containers in the microwave for 3 minutes.

__N__ Microwaving an egg.

__Y__ Covering your food with a paper towel while microwaving.

Appliance Safety Answer Keys

Are these things safe to do with a dishwasher?

- ☐Y__ Putting glass plates on the bottom shelf in the dishwasher.
- ☐N__ Using dish soap in the dispenser.
- ☐Y__ Storing dishwasher tabs or detergent in a high cabinet or a cabinet with a lock where children cannot reach them.
- ☐N__ Opening the dishwasher while it is running.
- ☐N__ Mixing dishwasher detergent with other chemicals.
- ☐N__ Touching hot dishes when the washing cycle finishes.

Are these things safe to do on the stove?

- ☐N__ Leaving the burner on when there's nothing on the burner.
- ☐Y__ Cooking food in a skillet on the stove.
- ☐N__ Keeping flammable items next to the stove.
- ☐N__ Leaving a skillet handle facing over the edge of the stove.
- ☐Y__ Checking that all burners are turned off after cooking.
- ☐N__ Using water to rinse a skillet with hot grease.

Appliance Safety Answer Keys

Are these things safe to do with the oven?

__N__ Keeping the oven door open to heat the house.

__Y__ Using metal or glass baking dishes in the oven.

__N__ Moving the racks without an oven mitt after heating the oven.

__Y__ Using oven mitts to remove a hot dish.

__N__ Leaving your home while food is cooking in the oven.