

## Rodents a major cause of domestic fires in Sharjah

A majority of fires can be prevented with care and awareness, says police fire expert  
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Sharjah: Rodents are a major cause of domestic fires and accidents in Sharjah as they gnaw away at electrical cables, wiring and gas cylinder tubing, said a police forensic expert. Tenants must inform the municipality or use pesticide to curb rodents, he advised.

Speaking to reporters during a tour of the Sharjah Forensic Laboratory, Col Adel Al Mazmi, fire accident expert, said that investigations into recent fires in villas, houses and apartments reveal negligence and lack of awareness to be the main cause of mishaps.

Leaving incense burners inside closets or under curtains, using poor-quality power cord extensions, leaving air-conditioner connections exposed, and having electrical wiring pass over carpets or near heat sources are among the causes for fire incidents, he said.

The warning came in the wake of increasing domestic fire accidents in Sharjah.

In one of the incidents, fire experts found the family was used to leaving hazardous items such as a hot iron plugged in, and within reach of children.

Col Al Mazmi also cautioned about the use of water heaters: “Water heaters, when not in use, should not be kept in operating mode. It can lead to evaporation of water inside [the unit] if the heater does not have a safety valve. [The heater] may explode.”

Families must also ensure the safety of electric cables and avoid overloading electrical connections because a short-circuit may lead to a fire, he added.

A majority of domestic fire accidents can be prevented with care and awareness, Col Al Mazmi said. He urged residents to undertake periodic maintenance of electrical installations inside and outside the house, and replace damaged units.