

WINTER FIRE SAFETY TIPS



Cold Weather Fire Safety In Your Home

- Have all heating appliances; furnaces, water heaters and wood stoves, checked and serviced yearly by a reliable professional.
- Make sure no flammable materials have been placed near any heating appliance during the summer when the appliance was not in use.
- Use space heaters with care and inspect electric heaters for damaged cords.
- Make sure there is a working smoke detector on every level of the home. Check the batteries every six months (Daylight Saving Time in April and October are a good rule of thumb) and replace them yearly.
- Develop a home fire escape plan with two exits from every room. Establish a meeting place in a safe location so all family members can be accounted for. Call the fire department from a cordless phone, at a neighbor's home or other safe location. Never re-enter a burning building for any reason. Practice your home escape plan every six months and consider practicing it at night when most home fires occur.
- Consider installing carbon monoxide detectors on every level of the home. It is best to install them near sleeping areas where the audible alarms can be heard. If the alarm goes off, exit the home and call 911. Recognize the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning and exit the home immediately if you suspect the presence of carbon monoxide. Call 911 from a safe location.

Safe Heating

Most home-heating fires involve portable heaters and space heaters. Gas and kerosene heaters account for the highest fatality risk. However, all heating systems, including fireplaces, can be dangerous if not used and maintained properly.

Before buying any heating equipment, check with your local fire department to ensure what you're buying conforms to local building and/or fire codes. When shopping for portable heaters or space heaters, look for automatic shut-off safety features. All portable heaters should bear the mark of an independent testing laboratory indicating that the heater has met basic safety standards.

Fireplaces

When you use your fireplace, protect your home from sparks by using a fire screen made of sturdy metal or heat-tempered glass. Burn only dry wood. Add wood carefully; sparks can escape into the room while the screen is open. Be sure dampers are in working order and never leave fires unattended.



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