HOME HEATING SAFETY TIPS

The NFPA recommends the following safety precautions when using heating equipment:

- Never use your oven to heat your home.
- Ensure you have working smoke alarms outside each sleeping area and on every level of your home; test the batteries monthly, and change them at least once a year.
- If you use any gas-burning appliances, like hot water heaters, fireplaces, stoves, or furnaces, make sure you have a working carbon monoxide alarm.
- Never use fuel burning appliances without proper ventilation. Burning fuel (coal, kerosene, or propane) can produce deadly fumes.
- Check your furnace filters monthly; if dark and clogged, replace it. Routinely replace your filter every three months.
- For gas furnaces, be sure the flame is properly adjusted. If your pilot light goes out contact your gas company, they will come out and light it for free.
- Have a qualified professional install stationary space heating equipment, water heaters or central heating equipment according to the local codes and manufacturer's instructions.
- Have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year by a qualified professional.
- The NFPA does not recommend kerosene heaters be used indoors; if you do, use only K-1 kerosene and not gasoline or camp stove fuel – both explode easily.

Portable Heaters

- Put at least three feet of empty space between the heater and everything else. The three foot safety zone includes furniture, draped, electronics – anything that can burn.
- Have a three foot “kid free zone” around your space heater.
- Vacuum and clean the dust and lint from all heaters.
- If the cord gets hot, frayed or cracked, have the heater serviced or replace it with a new one.
- Never use extension cords with portable electric heaters.
- Avoid using electrical space heater in bathrooms or other areas where it can come in contact with water.
- Remember to turn off portable heaters when leaving or going to bed.
- An adult should always be present when anyone is using a space heater around children.
- Make sure your portable electric heater is UL approved and has a tip-over shut off function.
- Always use only the type of fuel specified by the manufacturer for fuel burning space heaters.

Woodstoves and Fireplaces

- Have a certified chimney sweep clean and inspect your fireplace. You want to be sure the flue/chimney is clear of obstructions.
- Place ashes from a wood stove or fireplace in a metal container away from all structures. They can contain embers days after they are believed to be extinguished. Keep the container a safe distance away from your home.
- To prevent flue fires, burn dry, well-seasoned wood.
• Do not burn Christmas tree branches, treated wood, or wrapping paper in a home fireplace.
• Never use gasoline or other flammable liquids to light a fireplace. It’s a deadly combination.
• Make sure the fireplace has a sturdy screen to stop sparks from flying into the room.

Generators:
Carbon monoxide (CO) is an invisible killer. You cannot see or smell it. A generator’s exhaust contains poisonous CO, which can kill you in a matter of minutes. Follow these important generator safety tips:

• Never use a portable generator inside a home, garage, shed or other partially enclosed space, even if doors and windows are open.
• Place portable generators outside only, far away from the home. Keep the generator away from openings to the home, including doors, windows, and vents.
• Read the label on the generator and the owner's manual, and follow the instructions.
• Install CO alarms with battery backup in the home outside each sleeping area.
• Get to fresh air immediately if you start to feel sick, weak or dizzy. CO poisoning from exposure to generator exhaust can quickly lead to incapacitation and death.
• Be sure generator fuel is properly and safely stored.
• Always refuel the generator outdoors and away from any ignition sources.
• If you choose to have a generator permanently connected to your home’s electrical system, make sure a licensed electrician installs it and be sure to notify your electric company.

Candles:

• Place candles in sturdy, fireproof candleholders where they cannot be knocked over.
• Make sure all candles are out before going to bed or leaving the house.
• Keep candles, matches, and lighters out of children’s reach.
• Keep candles away from Christmas trees, evergreen clippings, decorations, presents, and wrapping paper.

Smoke Alarms:

• Install smoke alarms outside each sleeping area and in each bedroom.
• Test and vacuum your smoke alarms each month to make sure they are working.
• Smoke alarms 10 years old or older need to be replaced with new units.

Home Escape Plans:

• Have two ways out of every room.
• Practice your escape plan with your whole family at least twice a year.
• Do not attempt to go back into a burning home.