

Hints *For* Homeowners

Fireplace Safety Tips

(NAPSA)—During cool weather, many families look forward to the warmth and ambience of crackling fires in their home fireplace. But before you light a fire, there are some tips to consider:

Get the Fireplace Ready

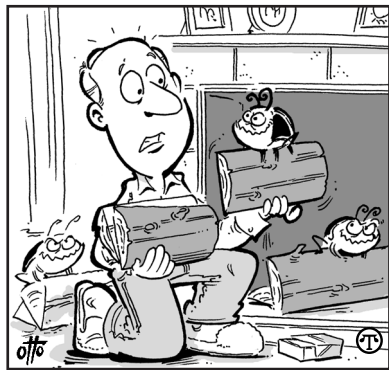
Past fires may have left soot deposits inside your chimney, so it is always a good idea to have it swept before use. Also, take a look up the flue. Make sure that it is clear of obstructions and debris.

If you notice any cracks in the mortar or crumbling cement, this is a warning sign that the chimney may need repair and you should contact a professional. Another area to check is the fireplace damper—make sure it works properly and fits snugly so that your fireplace won't allow cold air in or heat out.

Choosing Firewood

Be sure to replenish your wood supply. Well-seasoned firewood is easier to start, produces more heat and burns cleaner, reducing the amount of dangerous buildup. There are a few things you can look for to tell if wood is seasoned or not.

Well-seasoned firewood generally has darkened ends with cracks or splits visible, it is relatively lightweight and makes a clear “clunk” when two pieces are knocked together. “Green” wood has a much higher water content,



Purchasing firewood from local sources can help prevent the spread of invasive insects.

making it harder to start and less efficient when burning.

Buying Firewood

Firewood can harbor insects, such as the Emerald Ash Borer Beetle, a species that feeds on ash trees and has killed millions of trees across the U.S. Because of insects like these, it's important that you not move firewood, and instead purchase it close to where you plan to use it. Also, make sure that the firewood you purchase is from local resources.

At the end of the season, be sure to burn all the wood that you have ordered, so that any insects or larvae in the wood do not have the chance to spread.

For more information about the Emerald Ash Borer Beetle, visit StopTheBeetle.info.

Note to Editors: *Infestations of the Emerald Ash Borer Beetle are in IL, IN, MD, MI, MO, OH, PA, VA, WI and WV and all other states are at risk.*