

# Prevent Fire Hazards

(NAPSA)—You can help protect your home from the leading cause of winter fires.

“The United States has one of the world’s highest fire death rates, despite our advanced fire-fighting and life-saving skills,” said Elaine Josephson, MD, of the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP). “Those at greatest risk of dying from fire and smoke are those people over the age of 70 and children under the age of 5.”

ACEP offers the following practical, lifesaving tips you can use to ensure a safe winter.

## Inside the House

- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home. Test them monthly and change the batteries at least once a year. Consider installing the new long-life smoke alarms.

## Candles

- Avoid using lit candles. If you do use them, make sure they rest in stable holders and place them where they cannot easily be knocked down.

- Never leave the house with candles burning.

- Burning candles should never be placed on end tables or other areas where they might be knocked over. Keep burning candles out of window sills or any place where a curtain or other fabric item could be blown or fall into the flame.

- Keep the wicks trimmed to about one-quarter inch to one-half inch above the top of the candle.

## Heating Safety

- Keep anything that could catch fire at least three feet away from any heating source.



- Never use a kitchen oven range to heat your home. It is not only a fire hazard, but it can also give off toxic fumes.

- Make sure space heaters have “tip switches” so that they turn off if they are tipped over.

- Use only the fuel recommended by the manufacturer in a heater. Heaters should only be refilled when they are turned off and cooled.

- Always refill a heater with fuel outside the home.

- Never leave a fire in the fireplace unattended. Extinguish the fire before leaving the house or going to bed.

- Use seasoned woods only in the fireplace. Soft, moist wood accelerates creosote build-up in the chimney.

- Have the chimney inspected and cleaned on a regular basis.

- Never burn cardboard boxes, wrapping paper or trash; these can spark a chimney fire.

- Install stovepipe thermometers to help monitor flue temperatures when wood stoves are in use, so you can adjust burning practices as needed.