

HINTS FOR HOMEOWNERS

Winter Fire Safety: Tips For The Home

(NAPSA)—Keep your home safe. Alternate sources of home heating, such as wood burning stoves, space heaters, and fireplaces are a major contributing factor in residential fires. Many of these fires can be prevented. The following fire safety tips can help you maintain a fire-safe home this winter.

KEROSENE HEATERS

Be sure your heater is in good working condition. Inspect exhaust parts for carbon build-up. Be sure the heater has an emergency shut-off in case the heater is tipped over. Never use fuel-burning appliances without proper room venting. Use **ONLY** the fuel recommended by the heater manufacturer. Keep kerosene, or other flammable liquids stored in approved metal containers, in well-ventilated storage areas, outside of the house. **NEVER** fill the heater while it is operating or hot. When refueling an oil or kerosene unit, avoid overfilling. Use caution with cold fuel. It may expand in the tank as it warms up.

WOOD STOVES AND FIREPLACES

Wood stoves and fireplaces are a common heat source in homes. Careful attention to safety can minimize their fire hazard. To use them safely: Be sure the stove or fireplace is installed properly. Wood stoves should have adequate clearance (36") from combustible surfaces, and proper floor support and protection.

Wood stoves should be of good quality, solid construction and design, and should be UL listed. Have chimneys inspected annually and cleaned if necessary. Do not use flammable liquids to start or accelerate any fire. Keep a glass or metal screen in front of the fireplace opening to prevent sparks from escaping and unwanted material from going in. Never burn charcoal indoors. Burning charcoal can give off lethal amounts of carbon monoxide. Before you go to sleep, be sure your fireplace fire is out. **NEVER**



close your damper with hot ashes in the fireplace. A closed damper will help the fire to heat up again and will force toxic carbon monoxide into the house. If synthetic logs are used, follow the directions on the package.

FURNACE HEATING

Have your furnace inspected to ensure that it is in good working condition and all emergency shut-offs are in order. Inspect the walls and ceiling near the furnace and along the chimney line. If the wall is hot or discolored, additional pipe insulation or clearance may be required.

OTHER FIRE SAFETY TIPS

Never discard hot ashes inside or near the home. Place them in a metal container outside and well away from the house. Be sure every level of your home has a working smoke alarm, and be sure to test and clean it on a monthly basis.

The United States Fire Administration, an entity of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, is the federal leader in the areas of public fire education and awareness, fire service training, fire-related technology and data collection.

For further information on winter fire safety or other fire safety topics, write to the United States Fire Administration, Publications Office, 16825 South Seton Avenue, Emmitsburg, MD 21727 or visit <http://www.usfa.fema.gov>.