

SAFETY SENSE

When Temperatures Drop, Home Injuries Rise

(NAPSA)—Not all cold weather risks happen outside.

According to the Home Safety Council, colder weather means an overall increase in accidents within the home, especially from carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning and house fires.

In its *State of Home Safety in America Report*, the council found that 67 percent of households use gas, wood, kerosene, coal or fuel as their major heating source. These heating sources, which release carbon monoxide when burned, cause more than 100,000 medical visits and 300 home poisoning deaths each year due to improper equipment servicing or lack of precautionary detectors.

To protect yourself from carbon monoxide poisoning:

- Install at least one smoke alarm and CO alarm on every level of your home and near the sleeping areas.
- Have a trained professional inspect, clean and tune-up the central heating system and repair leaks.
- Keep gas appliances properly adjusted and serviced.
- Never use a cooking stove to heat your home.
- Never use a gas grill inside your home or in a closed garage.

Carbon monoxide poisoning isn't the only winter safety threat. The number of home fires increases as the months grow colder due to alternative heating sources such as wood stoves, fireplaces or space heaters. The report found that 97 percent of homes have smoke alarms installed, but only 19 percent of them tested properly.



Staying warm and cozy is safer with a few tips from the experts.

To protect yourself from fire-place and wood stove fires:

- Burn only wood—not trash, cardboard boxes or Christmas trees.
- Inspect chimneys every year for cracks, blockages and leaks.
- Open flues when fireplaces are in use.
- Clean your chimney at least once a year.
- Keep all persons and flammable objects at least 36 inches away from fireplaces and wood stoves.

Space Heaters:

- Turn off space heaters before leaving a room or going to sleep.
- Use proper fuel in kerosene space heaters.
- Use space heaters in well-ventilated areas.
- Keep all flammable objects at least three feet from space heaters.

For more home safety information and free brochures, visit www.homesafetycouncil.org.