

Winter Safety

Keep Your Home Safe from Fires and Other Emergencies This Winter

(NAPS)—While the winter season brings many joyful moments, it can also bring increased safety risks—but you can protect yourself, your home and your family.

Who Can Help

Volunteer fire departments across the country are raising awareness of seasonal hazards to protect residents and keep families safe. “Firefighters are there to protect their neighbors when emergencies arise, but they also work hard to prevent emergencies from happening in the first place,” said Steve Hirsh, Chair of the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC), the national association for the volunteer fire service.

Holidays, cold weather, and winter storms all bring their own fire hazards. In fact, the National Fire Protection Association reports more home fires occur in winter than any other season.

Fortunately, there are simple steps everyone can take to reduce the risks and keep their homes safe.

What You Can Do

The NVFC recommends the following 10 tips to minimize home fire and safety risks this winter.

- Stay alert when cooking. Do not leave the kitchen when frying, boiling, grilling, or broiling food, and keep kids at least 3 feet away from the stove.
- If using a live Christmas tree, keep it adequately watered and get rid of it after Christmas or when it gets dry.
- Consider using battery-operated flameless candles. If using real candles, do not leave them unattended, and keep them out of reach of children and pets.
- Place fire extinguishers in the kitchen, garage, and living room, and make sure all household members know how to use them.
- Install smoke alarms in every sleeping room, outside each separate sleeping area, and on every level of the home. Test them monthly to ensure they work.
- Install carbon monoxide alarms and test them at least once a month.
- Develop a home fire escape plan and practice it with the entire family.
- Keep portable generators outside and away from the home.
- Practice fireplace safety. Have chimneys professionally inspected and cleaned every year, install a screen in front of each fireplace or wood stove, and store cooled ashes in a metal container outside the home.



A few simple steps can protect your home and family from fire this holiday season and at anytime.

- Do not leave space heaters on unattended and keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from it.

How to Help Others

In addition to keeping their own homes safe, residents can take an active role in protecting their neighbors from fires, medical emergencies, natural disasters, and more. Many fire departments are looking for volunteers to step up and serve their communities.

“About two-thirds of our nations’ firefighters are volunteers, neighbors helping neighbors in their hour of need,” said Hirsch. “There are few volunteer opportunities that are as rewarding as the fire service. I encourage all those who want to make a true impact in their communities, learn life-saving skills, and join an incredible network of people to consider volunteering with their local fire department.”

The volunteer fire service offers roles for all ages, backgrounds, and interests, and training is provided by the department. Firefighters and emergency medical personnel provide life-saving services. Auxiliary or support members assist with the non-operational needs of the department, such as fire prevention and life safety education, disaster preparedness planning, fundraising, administration, and much more. Young people can participate as junior firefighters, learning about the fire service while gaining important life skills such as teamwork, responsibility, and leadership.

“Whether you are interested in becoming an emergency responder, support member, or junior firefighter, there is a place for you in the volunteer fire service,” Hirsch said.

Learn more

For more about the volunteer fire service and to find an opportunity visit www.MakeMeAFirefighter.com.