

## **Top 10 Winter Heating Safety Tips**

1. Never use ovens, ranges and grills as a primary or supplementary heating device. They may overheat and cause a fire, and they can produce deadly fumes.
2. Install carbon monoxide detectors in every home to warn of deadly gas levels.
3. Keep all heating devices at least 36” away from other objects, such as combustible walls and furniture.
4. Never fill kerosene heaters while hot and inside your home. Avoid overfilling the unit as cold fuel may expand in the tank as it warms up.
5. When using a space heater, never use an extension cord, never hang items to dry above the heater and never leave the space heater unattended.
6. Keep candles at least one foot away from anything that burns, especially highly flammable objects like Christmas trees, curtains and papers.
7. Make an escape plan that shows two ways out of every room and have everyone practice the plan before an emergency strikes.
8. Test your smoke alarm at least monthly by pushing the test button or by blowing smoke into the detector. Vacuum out the alarm at least once a year and make sure to replace the battery twice a year.
9. Inspect and clean your chimney annually before each heating season.
10. Burn only hard wood in a wood stove or fireplace that is clean and dry. Never burn plastics, garbage or wood that has been treated with a preservative, paint or other chemicals.

# Complete Winter Heating Safety Tips

## Winter Heating Safety

Winter increases the potential for house fires and other threats such as carbon monoxide, but they can be prevented by taking a few simple precautions.

## Carbon Monoxide

- Carbon monoxide detectors should be installed in every home to warn of deadly build-ups.
- Never use gas powered equipment or grills inside the home.
- If your carbon monoxide detector alarms, immediately evacuate the premises and go to a safe place and ask if anyone feels ill. If someone feels ill, call 911. The best treatment for carbon monoxide poisoning is fresh air.

## Fire Escape Planning

- Make an escape plan that shows two ways out of every room and have everyone practice the plan before an emergency occurs.

## Smoke Alarms

- Test your smoke alarm at least monthly by pushing the test button or by blowing smoke into the detector.
- Clean your smoke alarm at least once a year. Vacuum out the dust.
- Replace battery twice yearly—when you change your clocks in the spring and fall.

## All Heating Devices

- Keep at least 36” away from everything else including combustible walls and furniture.

## Furnace Heating

- Ensure that all controls and emergency shutoffs are in proper working condition.
- Have the furnace inspected/serviced by a professional annually.

## Wood Stoves and Fireplaces

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, solid fuel burning appliances cause an average of over 300 deaths and 200 injuries per year.

- Make sure your woodstove is installed properly and in good condition.
- Inspect and clean your chimney annually before each heating season for creosote buildup, cracks, crumbling brick or mortar, and obstructions. Burn your stove hot twice daily to reduce creosote buildup in the chimney.
- Do not use flammable liquids to start or accelerate any fire.
- Never close your damper with hot ashes in the fireplace and be sure the fire is out before going to sleep.
- Do not connect a wood stove to a fireplace chimney unless the fireplace has been sealed off. Also, do not connect a wood stove to a chimney serving another appliance burning other fuels.
- Keep a glass or metal screen in front of the fireplace opening and keep the stove door closed to prevent embers or sparks from jumping out.
- Limit the use of paper to build a fire and never burn charcoal in your stove or fireplace as burning charcoal can give off lethal amounts of carbon monoxide.
- Burn only clean, dry hard wood. Never burn plastics, garbage or wood that has been treated with a preservative, paint or other chemical. These materials can cause corrosion in the heater, the vent and in chimneys or produce dangerous toxic gases that could be harmful.

- Place ashes outdoors in a covered metal container at least three feet away from anything that can burn—not on wooden decks or porches. Do not place the ashes in a paper sack or cardboard box; there may still be a hot ember that could ignite the container. Embers may stay hot for several days.

### **Coal Burning Stoves**

- Build a coal fire using paper and dry kindling. Never use flammable liquids to start a coal fire.
- Keep the draft control fully open until a hot fire is established.
- Start adding in coal in small amounts. Make sure the coal is thoroughly ignited before adding more. Fill the stove to the highest possible level at this point; a deep bed of coal is critical for the proper functioning of all stoves.
- Open door slowly to allow oxygen to enter the stove and burn any built up combustible gases.
- Make sure the ash pan door is closed at all times and never discard ashes inside or near the home.
- Coal residue contains sulfur so the stovepipe and chimney systems will deteriorate much faster than if you burn wood. Check the pipe at least every six months and replace if it appears rusty or can be penetrated with the point of a pocketknife. Chimneys should be lined with stainless steel.

### **Kerosene Heaters**

- Before each winter season, be sure heater is in good working condition and inspect exhaust parts for carbon buildup.
- Make sure the heater is in a well-ventilated room.
- Use only approved heaters with an emergency shutoff if tipped over.
- Never fill a heater while hot and never inside your home. Avoid overfilling the unit; cold fuel may expand in the tank as it warms up.
- Don't move a burning heater and know how to use the manual shutoff in case of a flare-up.
- Use only the fuel recommended by the heater manufacturer.
- Keep kerosene in approved labeled metal containers, in ventilated storage areas, outside the house.
- Do not use a kerosene heater in a bedroom when you sleep. Never leave a heater unattended.

### **Electric Space Heaters**

- Choose models that have automatic safety switches that turn off the unit if it is tipped over.
- Never use an extension cord with an electric space heater.
- Never leave the heater unattended and never hang items to dry above the heater.

### **Cooking Equipment**

- Ovens, ranges and grills should never be used as a primary or supplementary heating device. They may overheat and cause a fire, and they can produce potentially deadly fumes.

### **Candle Safety**

- Keep candles at least one foot from everything that burns, especially highly flammable objects like Christmas trees, curtains and papers.
- Never leave burning candle unattended and keep candles away from children.
- Don't use candles near flammable liquids or vapors.