

Winter Fire Safety TIPS

This winter many there will be apartment, condo and home fires leaving families without homes. Most, if not all of these fires may have been avoided by a consistent practice of fire safety. To keep your family warm, safe and comfortably housed this winter, follow these safety tips.

Candles: Never leave candles unattended. Burn candles in sturdy non-combustible holders. Keep candles away from ignition sources, such as curtains. Keep candle wicks trimmed to 1/4". By reducing the flame size, candles will burn more safely and efficiently.

Fire extinguishers: Purchase one for your home and learn how to use it!

Fireplace: Have your chimney professionally cleaned once a year. Creosote, a sappy substance that comes from wood, builds up inside your chimney and can ignite. Install a spark arrester screen on the chimney top to avoid roof fires. Make sure fireplace embers are cold before discarding. Open the damper before lighting the fire. Never overload the fireplace. Never burn trash, wrapping paper or holiday greenery. Keep a screen or glass door in front of the fireplace to keep sparks from escaping. Never use flammable liquids to start a fire.

Furnace: Inspect, service and change filters

Matches/smoking materials: Keep matches and lighters out of reach of children. Teach children to bring matches and lighters to an adult. If you smoke, be sure all smoking materials are completely extinguished before discarding. Never smoke in bed.

Portable Heaters:

Give space heaters space! Keep heaters a minimum of three feet away from people, furniture, drapes and other combustibles. Do not leave on at night while sleeping. Keep away from children. Unplug when not in use. Purchase heaters with automatic shut-off features.

Smoke Detectors: Test smoke detectors, monthly, with a broom handle and replace the battery once a year. Be sure detectors are in every bedroom and every level of your home.

Wiring: Ensure all cords and appliances are Underwriters' Laboratories (UL) listed. Do not overload electrical outlets or use extension cords in place of permanent wiring. If you must use an extension cord, use only the kind that have a metal casing with a built-in circuit breaker. Replace or repair damaged cords immediately. Never run extension cords under rugs or mattresses.