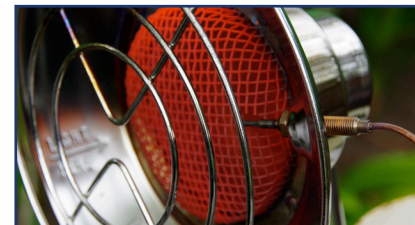




Home Heating Fire Safety

Safety Preparation

Heating equipment is among the leading causes of home fires nationally and in New York State. Very often heating related fires are the result of a lack of maintenance or because of an oversight. No matter how careful you are with home heating, you and your family should be prepared in case a fire starts.



- **Keep furnishings and other combustibles 36 inches from all heating sources** – A heating source too close to flammable items are the leading causes of fires due to home heating.
- **Store matches and other fire starting appliances out of the reach of children** – Fires started by children often have tragic results.
- **Install smoke detectors & have a fire extinguisher and on every floor of your home** – Check their expiration dates and replace if necessary. Test smoke detectors regularly and replace dead batteries immediately.
- **Make a Family Fire Emergency Plan** – Everyone in the household should know what to do in case there is a fire. Practice a home escape plan.

Follow Proper Maintenance

Proper maintenance and an annual inspection of heat pumps, furnaces, space heaters, wood and coal stoves, fireplaces, chimneys and chimney connections by qualified specialists can prevent fires and save lives. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for installation, venting, fueling, maintenance and repair. Review the owner's manual to remember the operating and safety features.

- 1. Space Heaters** – When using portable heaters, **DO NOT** place them where it is possible for small children or pets to fall against them or to receive a contact burn. Avoid the use of extension cords with electric heaters. Always turn off space heaters before leaving the room or going to bed.
- 2. Fuel Burning Appliances** – When taking a heater out of storage in the fall, install new batteries and inspect the shut off mechanism and wick for proper operation. Fill the tank with fresh fuel. Let the heater cool down before refueling. Adding fuel to a hot heater can start a dangerous fire.
- 3. Wood Burning Appliances and Fireplaces** – When using alternative heat sources such as a fireplace or woodstove, always make sure you have proper ventilation. Install woodstoves at least 36 inches away from the wall.
 - a. Only burn well-seasoned hardwoods; **DO NOT** burn trash in the wood stove or fireplace. Be sure the fire you build fits your fireplace or stove and avoid overloading it.
 - b. Keep combustible materials well away from the fireplace, stove and chimney, and keep the areas around them clean.
 - c. Always use a fireplace screen to prevent sparks from leaving the fireplace and starting a fire. Never leave a fire unattended.
- 4. Chimneys** – Creosote accumulation is the leading cause of chimney fires. A chimney that is dirty, blocked or is in disrepair can inhibit proper venting of smoke up the flue and can also cause a chimney fire. Nearly all residential fires originating in the chimney are preventable. An annual chimney inspection by a qualified chimney sweep can prevent fire or carbon monoxide poisoning.
- 5. Ashes** – Keep wood stoves and fireplaces free of excess ash buildup. Excessive ash buildup prevents good circulation of air needed for combustion. When removing ashes, use a metal container with a tight-fitting cover. Always place ashes in an outside location away from structures. Ashes that seem cool may contain a smoldering charcoal that can start a fire.

Be Prepared

- Per the **Department of Public Service**, have your heating system checked annually by a professional. This will ensure that your system is working safely and efficiently which, in turn, will save you money. If you heat by wood, clean your fireplace or stove. Have your chimney flue checked for any buildup of creosote and then cleaned to lessen the risk of fire.
- When indoors, use only safe sources of alternative heat such as a fireplace, small well-vented wood or coal stove or portable space heaters. Avoid using heat sources that are designed for outside use because they produce harmful carbon monoxide and are not designed with ventilation.
- Keep curtains, towels, potholders, and other flammable items away from hot surfaces.