

Winter Safety Tips

Energy Saving Tips

- Heating Systems
 - Set thermostats at 68 F when house is occupied during day and turn down at night time to around 65 F. There are programmable thermostats you can purchase at your local hardware store that can do this automatically
 - Make sure supply and return vents, radiators and baseboard heating units are not blocked by furniture, appliances or other objects and that air can flow freely to and from them. This will maximize the efficiency of your system and distribute warm air throughout the room
 - Clean or change furnace filters in forced air systems once a month or as needed
 - Have your heating system maintained and serviced according to manufacturer's instructions
 - Check heating ducts for air leaks from joints and holes and repair as needed
 - Insulate your hot water tank with an insulating jacket according to manufacturer recommendations.
- Windows and doors
 - Install caulking, weather stripping or use spray foams around exterior windows and doors or those between heated and unheated spaces (garages, basements, crawl spaces, attics).
 - During heating season, keep draperies and shades open during the day on your southern facing walls to allow sunlight to enter. Keep them closed at night to reduce heat loss and the chill or "draft" you may feel from cold windows
- Exhaust fans
 - Kitchen and bath fans can pull out a houseful of heated air in an hour
 - Turn off all fans when they have done the job

Home Heating Safety

- Did you know that heating equipment is involved in an estimated 62,000 reported US home structure fires each with associated losses of 670 deaths, 1550 injuries and \$909 million in damages each year? Did you know that space heaters account for around 1/3 of home heating fires and ¼ of home heating fire deaths? Did you know that chimneys and chimney connectors account for approximately 36% of home heating fires and that failure to clean chimneys accounts for 64% of confined chimney and chimney connector fires? Did you know the peak months for home heating fires are December, January and February accounting for around 44% of all home heating fires?

Home Heating Tips

- When buying a new space heater, make sure it carries the mark of an independent testing laboratory and is legal for use in your community
- Install your space heater according to manufacturer's instructions or applicable codes. Better yet, have it installed professionally
- Plug your electric-powered space heater into outlets only, never an extension cord
- Turn off space heaters when room is not in use
- In fireplaces and woodstoves, use only dry, seasoned wood to avoid build-up of creosote
- Inspect chimneys for obstructions or damage
- Check chimneys and stovepipes for creosote build-up, if build-up is identified, have chimney or pipe professionally cleaned
- Make sure fuel-burning equipment is always vented into own chimney and that the venting is kept clean and unobstructed, and that the exit point is properly sealed to prevent carbon monoxide build up in home
- Keep combustible materials away to avoid danger of ignition
- Keep sturdy screen in front of fireplace to prevent sparks from flying into room
- Allow ashes to cool in woodstove or fireplace before removal. Always place into metal container that is stored safe distance from home
- Inspect all heating equipment annually, and clean as necessary

Ice Dams

- Did you know that Ice Dams occur when heavy snow buildup melts during the day and then refreezes when temps drop overnight? After several days of this melting/freezing cycle, the melted water and ice works its way up under the shingles until the water enters the attic, damaging ceilings, walls and contents
 - Keep gutters and downspouts clear of debris, snow and ice, so melting snow can flow. Keep snow on your roof to a minimum, snow rakes makes it easy to remove snow from your gutter area from the ground
 - Evaluate the insulation and ventilation in your attic. Good airflow under eaves and soffits is essential to keeping your attic cool and dry. Roof vents ensure a steady flow of air through your attic.
 - Check for loose or damaged shingles and repair/replace as needed. Also, check the seal around flashings and chimney

Frozen Water Pipes

- Did you know that frozen and burst water pipes cause extensive damage to many homes and businesses each year? The damage from frozen pipes (and the resulting water flowing into the home) can cost thousands of dollars to repair floors, replace furniture and other items inside the home

- Consider installing products made to insulate water pipes like a "pipe sleeve" or installing UL-listed "heat tape," "heat cable," or similar materials on exposed water pipes, especially along exterior walls. Many products are available at your local building supplies retailer.
- Check around the home for other areas where water supply lines are located and are in unheated areas. Look in the basement, crawl space, attic, garage, and under kitchen and bathroom cabinets. Both hot and cold water pipes in these areas should be insulated. A hot water supply line can freeze just as a cold water supply line can if the water is not running through the pipe and the water temperature in the pipe becomes cold enough.
- Keep the heat on! If you go on vacation or will be away, don't turn your heat off. It's not necessary to keep it as high as if you were at home, but keeping the heat inside in the 50 - 60 degree range will help you keep the pipes warm. Consider shutting your water off altogether if you will be gone longer than 2 days. Have someone check on your house regularly to make sure the heat is still on and things are ok.
- Make sure you and your family knows how to turn off the water in case pipes do burst. Stopping the water flow can greatly minimize the damage

Candle Safety

According to the NFPA, since 2005, an estimated 15,600 home structure fires were started by candles. These fires resulted in an estimated 150 deaths, 1,270 injuries and an estimated direct property loss of \$539 million.

- Did you know that 41% of candle fires start in the bedroom resulting in approx. 25% of associated fire deaths?
- Did you know that December is the peak time of year for home candle fires? The Top 5 days for candle fires are Christmas, Christmas Eve, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day and Halloween.
- Did you know that more than half of all candle fires started with something combustible (furniture, bedding, curtains or decorations) that was placed too close to the candle?

Candle Safety Tips:

1. Always stay in the room where candles are being burned
2. Keep lit candles at least one foot away from curtains, bedding and anything that is flammable
3. Keep candles, matches and lighters away from children
4. Use sturdy candle holders that won't tip over or burn
5. Burn candles on sturdy, uncluttered surfaces
6. Trim candle wicks to ¼ inch before lighting
7. Extinguish candles when they burn to within 2 inches of their holder
8. When lighting candles, keep hair and clothing away from flame