



ROBBINSDALE FIRE DEPARTMENT



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WINTER - FIRE SAFETY

(TIPS FOR THE HOME)

For The Home

As winter approaches, many of us use supplemental heating sources to heat our homes. Wood burning stoves, space heaters, kerosene heaters, and gas or wood fireplaces. These methods of heating may be acceptable but are often a major contributor to residential fires.

Wood Stoves & Fireplaces

- Be sure the stove or fireplace is installed properly. Woodstoves should have proper floor support and protection and at least 36” clearance from combustible materials.
- Have the chimney inspected annually and cleaned if necessary. Especially if it has not been used in some time.
- Never use flammable liquids to start or accelerate any fire.
- Keep a glass or metal screen in front of the opening , to prevent embers or sparks from jumping out, and help prevent the possibility of burns to occupants.
- The stove should be burned hot twice a day for 15-30 minutes to reduce the buildup

of creosote.

- Don't use excessive amounts of paper to build roaring fires in fireplaces. It is possible to ignite creosote in the chimney by overbuilding the fire.
- Never burn charcoal indoors. It can give off lethal amounts of carbon monoxide.
- Keep flammable materials away from your fireplace mantel. A spark from the fireplace could easily ignite these materials.
- Before going to sleep be sure your fireplace fire is completely out. **NEVER close your damper with hot ashes in the fireplace.** A closed damper will help the fire to heat up again and will force carbon monoxide into the house.
- If using synthetic logs be sure to follow the directions on the package. NEVER break a synthetic log apart to quicken the fire or use more than one log at a time. They often burn unevenly, releasing higher levels of carbon monoxide.

Furnace Heating

It's important to have your furnace inspected by a qualified individual to ensure proper working condition.

- Be sure furnace controls and shutoffs are in working condition.
- Inspect the walls and ceiling near the furnace and along the chimney line. If the wall is hot or discolored, additional pipe insulation or clearance may be necessary.
- Check the flue pipe and seams for soot, which may be an indication for a leak.
- Keep trash and other combustibles away from the heating system.

Kerosene Heaters

- Be sure your heater is in good working condition, Inspect exhaust parts for carbon buildup. Be sure the heater has an emergency shut-off in case the heater is tipped over.
- Never use fuel-burning appliances without proper room ventilation. Burning fuel (coal, kerosene or propane for example) can produce deadly fumes.

- Use ONLY the fuel recommended by the heater manufacturer. NEVER introduce a fuel into a unit not designed for that fuel.
- Keep kerosene or other flammable liquids stored in approved metal containers, in well-ventilated storage areas, outside of the house.
- NEVER fill the heater while it is operating or hot. When refueling an oil or kerosene unit, avoid overfilling cold fuel as it may expand in the tank as it warms up.

Other Fire Safety Tips

- Never discard hot ashes inside or near the home. Place them in a metal container outside and well away from the house.
- When using an electric heater, be sure not to overload the circuit. Only use extension cords that have the necessary rating to carry the amp load.
- A range or oven should never be used as a supplemental heating device. Not only is it a safety hazard, it can be a source of potentially toxic fumes.
- Avoid using electrical space heaters in bathrooms, or other areas where they may come into contact with water.

Finally...

- Be sure every level of your home has a working smoke alarm and be sure to test on a monthly basis.
- Develop and practice a home escape plan with your family. Know - two ways out of every room and have a meeting place outside your home.
- Have at least one carbon monoxide detector in the home.