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Home
Site Map
Contact Us
Search



Natural Gas Choice

Prepare Now-Home Heating Safety Tips

- Stay Warm PA●
- Budget Billing●
- Energy Conservation●
- Lowering Your Bill●
- Home Heating Safety Tips●
- News Bureau●
- Resources●

► [Home](#) \ [Natural Gas](#) \ [Prepare Now](#)

According to the United States Fire Administration, more than one-fifth of residential fires are related to the use of supplemental room heaters - wood- and coal-burning stoves, kerosene heaters, gas space heaters and electric heaters - so, before you put logs in the fireplace or plug in the electric heater, take some precautions. And never use an oven or stove to help heat your home.

Furnaces:

Your furnace should be checked regularly by a professional. The flame should burn a bright, steady blue and should never come outside of the furnace. If you hear or smell natural gas leaking from your furnace lines, evacuate the house immediately and use a phone outside the house to call 911.



Fireplaces:

Fireplace chimneys regularly build up creosote that can ignite. Chimneys need to be cleaned out frequently and inspected for cracks and obstructions. Never burn trash, paper, or green wood in your fireplace because these are difficult to control and cause heavy creosote buildup. And use a fireplace screen that is both big enough to cover the entire opening of the fireplace to catch flying sparks and heavy enough to stop rolling logs.

Wood Stoves:

Inspect and clean your stovepipe and chimney on a regular basis and check monthly for damage or obstructions. Be sure to keep combustible objects away from the stove. Be sure to check with your local fire department and check local codes before having your stove installed.

Space Heaters:

Only use heaters with the Underwriters Laboratories (UL) safety listing. Read and follow all instructions in the owner's manual. The heater should be placed on the floor, away from combustible materials, and out of high-traffic areas. Never put

anything on top of your space heater. Never leave the heater unattended or with unsupervised children. Electric heaters should be unplugged if you go to bed or leave the house. Kerosene heaters should be turned off if you go to bed or leave the house. And use only crystal clear K-1 kerosene in your kerosene heater - never gasoline or camp stove fuel.

Carbon Monoxide:

Along with fire, another potential danger of home heating is carbon monoxide poisoning. If you have any appliances or equipment that burn fuel such as propane or natural gas, fuel oil, kerosene, wood, coal, pellets, etc., you should install a carbon monoxide detector.

Smoke Detectors:

Smoke detectors save lives. Install a smoke alarm outside each sleeping area and on each additional level of your home. Use the test button to check each smoke alarm once a month. Keep new batteries on hand. When necessary, replace batteries immediately. Replace all batteries at least once a year.

Fire Extinguishers:

Consider having one or more working fire extinguishers in your home. Look at the fire extinguisher to ensure it is properly charged. Use the gauge or test button to check proper pressure. If the unit is low on pressure, damaged, or corroded, have it professionally serviced. Only adults should handle and use extinguishers.

Electrical Outlets:

Don't overload your outlets. Use surge protectors if multiple outlets are needed and do not insert more than two plugs into one outlet. Never force a three-pronged plug into a two-pronged outlet or extension cord.

This material was partly compiled from a variety of sources including the American Red Cross, United States Fire Administration and American Gas Association.