



Township of Falls *Office of the Fire Marshal*

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The Falls Township Fire Marshal would like to remind you of some fire safety tips for this time of year:

Fireplace and Home Fire Safety

More than one-third of Americans use fireplaces, wood stoves and other fuel-fired appliances as primary heat sources in their homes. Unfortunately, many people are unaware of the fire risks when heating with wood and solid fuels.

Heating fires account for 36% of residential home fires in rural areas every year. Often these fires are due to creosote buildup in chimneys and stovepipes. All home heating systems require regular maintenance to function safely and efficiently.

The United States Fire Administration (USFA) encourages you to practice the following fire safety steps to keep those home fires safely burning.

Remember, fire safety is your personal responsibility ...Fire Stops With You!

Keep Fireplaces and Wood Stoves Clean

- Have your chimney or wood stove inspected and cleaned annually by a certified chimney specialist.
- Clear the area around the hearth of debris, decorations and flammable materials.
- Keep a fire extinguisher on hand.

- Leave glass doors open while burning a fire. Leaving the doors open ensures that the fire receives enough air to ensure complete combustion and keeps creosote from building up in the chimney.
- Close glass doors when the fire is out to keep air from the chimney opening from getting into the room. Most glass fireplace doors have a metal mesh screen which should be closed when the glass doors are open. This mesh screen helps keep embers from getting out of the fireplace area.
- Always use a metal mesh screen with fireplaces that do not have a glass fireplace door.
- Install stovepipe thermometers to help monitor flue temperatures.
- Keep air inlets on wood stoves open, and never restrict air supply to fireplaces. Otherwise you may cause creosote buildup that could lead to a chimney fire.
- Use fire-resistant materials on walls around wood stoves.

Safely Burn Fuels

- Never use flammable liquids to start a fire.
- Use only seasoned hardwood. Soft, moist wood accelerates creosote buildup.
- Build small fires that burn completely and produce less smoke.
- Never burn cardboard boxes, trash or debris in your fireplace or wood stove.
- When building a fire, place logs at the rear of the fireplace on an adequate supporting grate.
- Never leave a fire in the fireplace unattended. Extinguish the fire before going to bed or leaving the house.
- Soak hot ashes in water and place them in a metal container with a tight fitting lid and place the container outside away from your home.
- Never burn a Christmas tree in the fireplace.
- Keep small children and pets away from the fireplace.

- Check the batteries in your smoke detector and carbon monoxide detector monthly, and change the batteries twice a year when you change your clocks.

Protect the Outside of Your Home

- Stack firewood outdoors at least 30 feet away from your home.
- Keep the roof clear of leaves, pine needles and other debris.
- Cover the chimney with a mesh screen spark arrester.
- Remove branches hanging above the chimney, flues or vents.

Protect the Inside of Your Home

- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home and inside and outside of sleeping areas. Test them monthly and change the batteries at least once a year. Consider installing the new long life smoke alarms.
- Install a carbon monoxide detector in your home.
- Provide proper venting systems for all heating equipment.
- Extend all vent pipes at least three feet above the roof.

GAS FIREPLACE SAFETY MAINTENANCE TIPS

Gas fireplaces also require routine maintenance and service to ensure their proper working order. The best person to perform the service is a specialty retailer who is trained in the maintenance of gas fireplaces. A retailer will complete the following type of tasks when performing service on a gas fireplace:

- Adjust millivolt output.
- Clean and adjust the glowing embers and logs for best appearance.
- Clean the fan and related air circulation passages.
- Clean the glass.
- Ensure the vents are unobstructed and able to do their job.

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