

For Immediate Release

Wayne Holmes Emergency Coalition

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FIRE SAFETY PRACTICES

In this very busy holiday season, let's take a moment to think about fire safety in the home. Woodstoves, fireplaces, and candles are safe products. However, unless they are used safely and watched carefully, they can lead to an accidental fire. Woodstoves are the source of nearly 9,000 fires a year. In the U.S. fireplaces are the culprits of about 14,000 fires annually. Candles cause an estimated 18,000 fires a year. Here are some safety tips for woodstoves, fireplaces and candles.

KEEP FIREPLACES AND WOODSTOVES 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
- Always use a metal mesh screen with fireplaces. Leave glass doors open while burning a fire
- 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 outside your home

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. Test them monthly, and change the batteries at least once a year. Consider installing the new long-life smoke alarms
- Provide proper venting systems for all heating equipment
- Extend all vent pipes at least three feet above the roof

CANDLE SAFETY RULES

- Always keep a burning candle within sight
- Never burn a candle on or near anything that can catch fire
- Keep candles out of the reach of children and pets
- Trim candlewicks to ¼ inch each time before burning
- Always use a candleholder specifically designed for candle use
- Be sure the candleholder is placed on a stable, heat-resistant surface
- Keep the wax pool free of wick trimmings, matches, and debris at all times
- Always read and follow the manufacturer's use and safety instructions carefully
- Keep burning candles away from drafts, vents, ceiling fans, and air currents
- Always burn candles in a well-ventilated room
- Don't burn a candle all the way down. Extinguish the flame if it comes too close to the holder or container
- Never touch a burning candle or move a votive or container candle when the wax is liquid
- Place burning candles at least three inches apart from one another
- Use a candle snuffer to extinguish a candle
- Never extinguish candles with water
- Be careful if using candles during a power outage
- Make sure a candle is completely extinguished and the wick ember is no longer glowing
- Extinguish a candle if it smokes, flickers, or the flame becomes too high
- Never use a candle as a night light

In the event of a fire, every second counts. Escape first, then call for help. Develop a home fire escape plan and designate a meeting place outside. Make sure everyone in the family knows two ways to escape from every room. Practice feeling your way out with

your eyes closed. Never stand up in a fire, always crawl low under the smoke, and try to keep your mouth covered. Never return to a burning building; it may cost you your life. Finally, having a working smoke alarm dramatically increases your chances of surviving a fire.

Remember, fire safety is your personal responsibility...*Fire stops with you!*

For more information Contact:

The United States Fire Administration at www.usfa.fema.gov

National Candle Association at www.candles.org/safety_rules.html

OR

Contact your local fire department