

Stay Safe and Stay Warm

A house fire can be avoided with help from the Great Winter Weather Prep. As the nights get cooler, you will be looking for ways to keep warm like lighting the fireplace, cranking up the furnace, and turning on the space heaters. These tips will help you keep your family safe and warm this winter season.



Fireplace Safety

Before you light your first fire of the season:

- ✿ 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.
- ✿ Provide proper venting systems for all heating equipment. Make sure all vent pipes extend at least three feet above the roof.
- ✿ 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.

While enjoying your fire:

- ✿ If you have glass fireplace doors, leave them open while burning a fire to ensure that the fire receives enough air to ensure complete combustion and keep creosote from building up in the chimney.
- ✿ Always use a metal mesh screen with fireplaces that do not have a glass fireplace door.
- ✿ Never use flammable liquids to start a fire and use only seasoned hardwood. Never burn cardboard boxes, trash, charcoal, or debris in your fireplace or wood stove.
- ✿ Build small fires that burn completely and produce less smoke.
- ✿ When building a fire, place logs at the rear of the fireplace on an adequate supporting grate.
- ✿ 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.

Once you are done with your fire:

- ✿ Never leave a fire in the fireplace unattended. Extinguish the fire before going to bed or leaving the house. Close the glass doors, if you have them, to keep the chimney air out of the room.
- ✿ Soak hot ashes in water and place them in a metal container outside of your home.

Source: [US Fire Administration](#)

Furnace Safety

- ☼ Be sure all furnace controls and emergency shutoffs are in proper working condition. If something needs repair, call a licensed professional. Do not attempt repairs on your own, unless you are qualified.
- ☼ 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 required.
- ☼ Check the flue pipe and pipe seams to make sure they are well supported, and free of holes and cracks. Soot along or around seams may be an indicator of a leak.
- ☼ Keep trash and other combustibles away from the heating system.

Source: [Federal Emergency Management Agency](#)

Portable Space Heater Safety

Read the Labels

- ☼ When buying a heater, look for one that has been tested and labeled by a nationally recognized testing company, such as Underwriter's Laboratories (UL).
- ☼ Purchase a space heater with more modern safety features like those that shut off if the heater is tipped or turned over.

Location, Location, Location

- ☼ Keep the heater three feet away from drapes, furniture, or other flammable materials.
- ☼ Place the heater on a level surface away from areas where someone might bump into it and knock it over. Be careful to keep children and pets away from the heater.
- ☼ Try to locate electric space heaters where they can be plugged directly into the wall outlet. If you must use an extension cord, make sure it is a heavy duty cord marked with a power rating at least as high as that on the label of the heater itself.
- ☼ Keep electric heaters away from water. Never use them near a sink or in the bathroom. Never leave a space heater unattended or running while you sleep.

Liquid Fueled Heater Tips

- ☼ For liquid-fueled heaters, follow the manufacturer's fueling instructions using only the approved fuel. Never use gasoline! Never fill a heater that is still hot. Do not overfill the heater; you must allow for the expansion of the liquid. Only use approved containers clearly marked for the particular fuel available, and store them outdoors.
- ☼ Have vented space heaters professionally inspected every year. If the heater is not vented properly, not vented at all, or if the vent is blocked, separated, rusted, or corroded, dangerous levels of carbon monoxide (CO) can enter the home causing sickness and death. CO also can be produced if the heater is not properly set up and adjusted for the type of gas used and the altitude at which it is installed.

Source: [US Department of Energy](#)

Keep the Heat When the Power Goes

Power outages are a particular risk during extreme winter weather. Ice storms and blizzards often result in power outages that can last for several days. When it is cold outside and is too dangerous to travel away from your home, it becomes increasingly important to make sure that you have heat inside. A professionally installed automatic standby generator is a great option in providing power to your home along with:

- ✿ Providing heat to keep family warm and comfortable
- ✿ Keeping the house warm so pipes don't freeze and cause water damage
- ✿ Keeping communications systems running so you can stay informed of updates on the weather, friends and family and travel/safety conditions
- ✿ Ensuring that sump pumps are protecting the basement from water damage in case large amounts of snow begin to melt
- ✿ Preserving food and fresh water for the family
- ✿ Supporting well pumps for running water/flushing
- ✿ Automatically protecting your home even if you are not there

Source: [Kohler Generators](#)

