



City of Manassas Fire and Rescue Department Office of the Fire Marshal

Winter Heating Safety Tips



With the cold weather here, City residents have begun using portable heating devices to help keep their homes and offices warm. While many are anxious to get their units up and running quickly, safe measures and precautions should always be taken to ensure a safe, warm home or office through the upcoming winter.

Heating equipment is the leading cause of home fires during the months of December, January and February, and trails only cooking equipment in home fires year-round.

Portable Electric Heaters

Residents should remember to keep furniture and other combustible items at least three feet away from heaters. Electric heaters are temporary heating devices that should only be used for a limited time each day. Never connect an electric heater to an outlet with an extension cord or use a heater that has a damaged or frayed cord. When not in use, be sure to unplug the unit and let it cool down. Never use heaters to dry clothing or other combustibles.

Kerosene Heaters

Use with care! Never refill a Kerosene heater indoors or while the unit is still warm. Kerosene heaters can produce carbon monoxide. It is recommended that you buy a carbon monoxide detector and use your kerosene heater in well ventilated areas only. For maximum efficiency and safety, keep your heater well maintained and clean. You should also keep all interior doors open to allow fresh air to circulate. Never leave a kerosene heater burning unattended.

Coal and Wood Burning Stoves

Use coal only if specifically approved by the stove manufacturer. Gasoline or other flammable liquids should never be used to start a wood fire since it might explode or flare up. Never use gasoline in kerosene heaters. The directions on artificial logs made from wax and sawdust say they should be used one at a time in fireplaces and never used in wood stoves. This is because the heat can melt the log causing it to flare up or leak burning liquid from the appliance.

Barbeques (Yes, there are cases of people using barbeques in their homes)

Barbecues should never be used indoors or as a heating or cooking device. Barbecues produce large amounts of carbon monoxide and are not intended for indoor use.

Fireplaces

Before using the fireplace make sure the flue is open. The flue is a trap door that keeps heat out in the summer and cool air from coming in when the fireplace is not in use. Artificial logs made from



wax and sawdust should be used one at a time. Pressure-treated wood should not be burned in stoves or fireplaces because it contains toxic chemicals that can make you sick.

Never leave a fireplace unattended. Chimneys and vents should be inspected and cleaned annually. Have chimneys inspected and cleaned when necessary by a professional chimney sweep.

Remember to always be Fire Safe!

For more information on these topics or others please contact us:

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