



Frederick County, Virginia Fire and Rescue Department



PRESS RELEASE

For Additional Information:

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Winter Heating Safety

As the temperature outside drops, Frederick County families take to the indoors to keep safe and warm. What they may not realize is that turning up the heat can increase the risk of home heating fires.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), half of all home-heating fires occur during December, January, and February. Heating related fires peak between 6:00p.m. and 11:00p.m., with associated deaths peaking between midnight and 10:00am.m. The latest NFPA research shows that heating equipment was involved in 64,100 reported U.S. home structure fires in 2006, with associated losses of 540 civilian deaths, 1,400 civilian injuries, and \$943 million in direct property damage.

NFPA and **Frederick County** recommend some simple home heating safety tips, so residents can help keep our community safe and warm this winter.

- Space heaters need space. Keep all things that can burn, such as paper, bedding and curtains, or furniture, **at least** 3 feet away from heating equipment.
- Turn portable heaters off when you go to bed or leave the room.
- Plug power cords only into outlets with sufficient capacity and never into an extension cord.
- Inspect for cracked, frayed or broken plugs or loose connections. Replace before using.
- Make sure fuel-burning equipment is vented to the outside to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Always use the proper fuel as specified by the manufacturer.
- Have your chimney inspected each year and cleaned if necessary.
- Use a sturdy fireplace screen.
- Allow ashes to cool before disposing. Dispose of ashes in a metal container.
- Install smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home. For the best protection interconnect all smoke alarms throughout the home — when one sounds, they all sound. Test smoke alarms at least once a month.
- Install and maintain a carbon monoxide alarm in a central location outside each sleeping area.
- Never use an oven to heat your home.