

NEWS RELEASE

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FALL HOME HEATING SAFETY TIPS

SUFFOLK, VA (October 25, 2018) – While we’ve had an unseasonably warm fall so far, we know that steady cooler weather is sure to follow and many of us have already started using our heaters in the mornings and evenings to combat the chill.

Fire Marshal Lieutenant Chuck Chapin says, “Protecting yourself from home heating fires begins with taking the proper precautions and ensuring you are prepared”, and he would like to remind our citizens to keep the following simple safety tips in mind to prevent most heating-related fires from happening:

- Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from heating equipment, like the furnace, fireplace, wood stove, or portable space heater.
- Have a three-foot “kid-free zone” around open fires and space heaters.
- Never use your oven to heat your home.
- Have a qualified professional install stationary space heating equipment, water heaters or central heating equipment according to local codes and manufacturer’s instructions.
- Have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year by a qualified professional.

- Remember to turn portable heaters off when leaving the room or going to bed.
- Always use the right kind of fuel, specified by the manufacturer, for fuel burning space heaters.
- Make sure the fireplace has a sturdy screen to stop sparks from flying into the room. Ashes should be cool before putting them in a metal container. Keep the container a safe distance away from your home.
- If you do install a wood burning stove, make sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions or have a professional do the installation. The equipment needs to be vented to the outside to prevent carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. CO alarms should be installed to avoid this risk. Since CO is odorless and poisonous, it's crucial that you keep your family and pets safe from its toxin. Again, be sure to change the batteries twice per year.
- Test smoke alarms at least once a month.
- Plan a fire escape route for each room of your home and ensure everyone in your household knows it. Ensure it's easily accessible.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), heating was the second leading cause of home fires after cooking. For more information on home fire safety, please contact the Suffolk Fire & Rescue Department at 757-514-4550, or email fireprevbureau@suffolkva.us.

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