

## **NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** \_\_\_\_\_

December 13 2010



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## **WINTER HEATER FIRE SAFETY TIPS**

SUFFOLK, VIRGINIA (December 13, 2010) - Cold temperatures are here to stay for a while and the Suffolk Fire Department wants you to “stay safe” as you “stay warm” this winter season. Suffolk Fire Chief Mark Outlaw says, “Taking “time” now to ensure your heating system is working safely could spare you a potential “lifetime” worth of sorrow and regrets”. So it’s a good time to remind you about some simple safety measures you can take to avoid putting you or your loved ones in danger.

### **Using A Furnace**

- Do not store combustible material such as paint thinners, gasoline, etc. near your furnace.
- Do not have anything combustible within six inches of your vent pipe.
- Do not close off more than 20% of the registers in your house. This can cause high resistance and unnecessary heat buildup in the furnace.
- Have working smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors.
- The furnace should be checked and cleaned once every year.

### **Using Fireplaces**

- Only use wood or artificial logs.
- Always use a fireplace screen.
- The chimney should be checked and cleaned once every year.

### **Using Electric Space Heaters**

- Keep all space heaters at least 3 feet away from household combustibles.
- Use space heaters only as a supplementary source of heat. These devices are not intended to replace the home's heating system.
- Heaters should be placed on a flat, level surface. Do not place heaters on furniture since they may fall and become damaged or break parts in the heater.
- Do not use extension cords with space heaters unless absolutely necessary. Inspect the heater's cord periodically to look for frayed wire or damaged insulation. Do not use a space heater with a damaged cord.
- Unless the heater is designed for use outdoors or in bathrooms, do not use in damp, wet areas.

### **Using Kerosene Heaters**

- Only burn heaters in well-ventilated areas.
- Kerosene heater should be placed at least 3 feet away from combustible items.
- Refuel heater outside.
- When refueling, turn off the heater and let it cool down completely before adding fuel. Wipe away any spills promptly.
- Use only the fuel recommended by the manufacturer. The wrong fuel could burn hotter than the equipment was designed for, and cause a serious fire.
- Kerosene heater should automatically turn off if tipped over.

If you want additional information on fire safety, please call the Suffolk Fire Marshal's Office at 757-514-4539.

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