

## Winter Fires

The high cost of home heating fuels and utilities have many families searching for alternate sources of home heating. Wood burning stoves, space heaters, and fireplaces are common. These methods of heating may be acceptable, but they are also a major contributing factor in residential fires. Many of these fires can be prevented. The following fire safety tips can help maintain a fire safe home.

- Be sure your heater is in good working condition. Inspect exhaust parts for carbon buildup.
- Never use fuel burning appliances without proper room venting.
- Use only the fuel recommended by the heater manufacturer.
- NEVER fill a heater while it is operating or hot.
- Be sure fireplace or stoves are installed properly.
- Have chimney inspected annually and cleaned when needed.
- Do not use flammable liquids to start or accelerate any fire.
- The wood stove should be burned hot twice a day for 15-30 minutes to reduce the amount of creosote.
- Keep flammable materials away from your fireplace mantel.
- Be sure not to overload the circuit if using an electric heater.
- Be sure every level of your home has a working smoke alarm, and check them monthly.
- Plan and practice a home escape plan with your family.
- Contact your local fire department for advice if you have questions on home fire safety.