

CHIMNEY FIRE SAFETY

Maintenance Can Prevent Home Fires



Most of us think of Fall as a time to weatherproof our homes in preparation for the coming winter months, but how many of us prepare our fireplaces or wood burning stoves? Whether you use your fireplace for aesthetic reasons or as a source of heat, fireplaces and wood burning stoves need to be maintained. By following a few simple guidelines, you can prevent a chimney fire in your home:

Maintenance—a very important step in preventing chimney fires!

- Have your chimney checked every year by a qualified chimney professional.
- Burn only well seasoned, dry hardwoods. Wood that is not properly dried creates creosote build-up in our fireplace or stove flue.
- Install carbon monoxide detectors in your home.
- Following a significant storm, earthquake, flood or lightning strike, have your chimney inspected for damage—inside and out.

Prevention—Remember, prevention is your best defense against fire!

- Be sure your wood burning appliances meets local fire codes and manufacturer's recommendations for proper installation.
- If you have a wood or coal stove, be sure it is installed at least 36 inches away from the wall. Keep combustible materials well away from the stove and chimney connector. Place an approved stove board under the unit to protect the floor from heat and hot coals that can drop out.
- When burning in your wood stove or fireplace, avoid a smoldering fire. The lack of air supply to your fire can create a heavy build up of creosote. Consider installing a wood stove thermometer, which will allow you to make proper air adjustments.
- Homeowners can help reduce pollution and gas in the air by their burning habits. Burn only wood—paper products can float out of the chimney and ignite your roof or neighboring home.

Be Prepared —If you have a chimney fire, or fire in your wood burning stove, evacuate your home immediately and call 911.

- Install smoke detectors on every level of your home and outside sleeping areas.
- Make and practice a “Home Escape Plan” and be sure that everyone in the home understands what they must do to get out quickly and safely.

