



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **“Winter Fire Safety Tips”**



As temperatures drop during the Winter months, proper preparation is essential in reducing the number of fire casualties. Heating equipment is the cause of several residential fires each year. These fires often result in civilian injuries, fire fatalities and property damages. Heating equipment includes but is not limited to space heaters, fireplaces, wood burning inserts, furnaces, stoves, etc. House fires tend to increase during the winter months, specifically in December and January, largely due to the increase of indoor activities. According to the U.S. Fire Administration, heating and electrical fires are two of the leading causes of residential fires. Over one-quarter of these fires result from improper maintenance of equipment, specifically, the failure to clean the equipment.

Many heating fires are preventable when precautionary measures are taken. Listed are several fire safety tips that could potentially reduce the number of fire related incidents.

### **Safety Tips:**

1. Keep portable space heaters at least three (3) feet away from combustible materials.
2. Don't overload electrical outlets.
3. Avoid using too many extension cords. *They are intended for temporary use only.*
4. Have fireplaces, chimneys and wood burning inserts inspected by a licensed technician to insure proper installation, adequate clearance and to insure that chimneys are free of debris and creosote buildup.
5. Never leave fireplaces, space heaters and candles unattended.
6. Kerosene heaters should be refueled outdoors. Only use fuel recommended by the manufacturer. Make sure rooms are properly ventilated.
7. Never use kitchen stoves as a source of heat.
8. Do not use portable generators in the home, garage, carport, shed or partially enclosed spaces. Place generators outside only.
9. Carbon monoxide is considered a silent killer and is often present when equipment is improperly vented.
10. Always maintain a working smoke alarm and carbon monoxide alarm in your place of residence. For a free smoke alarm contact the Fire Museum of Memphis at (901) 636-5650. Remember that 9-1-1 is for emergencies only. For all other **FIRE/EMS NON-EMERGENCY** issues please dial (901) 458-8281. *For more information visit the U.S. Fire Administration web site at [www.usfa.dhs.gov](http://www.usfa.dhs.gov)*