

# November 2009 Safety Share

## Fall Fire Safety Tips

As summer turns to fall, it's a good idea to refresh your memory on **fall fire safety tips**. Some safety tips are the same regardless of the time of year, but many safety concerns are seasonal, particularly those that involve keeping your home warm.



### Time Changes Mean Battery Changes

Get in the habit of changing the batteries in your **smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors** every fall and spring when changing the clocks for Daylight Savings Time. It is also a good idea to make it standard procedure in your household to verify that all fire extinguishers are fully charged and in working order when you adjust the clocks each season.

### Home Heating Tips

No matter what type of device you use to heat your home, making sure your heating devices and/or systems are in good working order is an important part of learning some fall fire safety tips. Many things can go wrong with heating equipment during the spring and summer months. Verify that everything you need to keep your home warm throughout fall and winter is in good working order before you experience the first cold snap of the season.

#### - Central Heating System Safety Tips

Get your central heating system cleaned, inspected and serviced by a certified HVAC (heating, venting and air conditioning) contractor every year before using it.

If you have a gas heater, make sure that you have a sufficient quantity of fully functioning **carbon monoxide detectors** installed in your home.

### - Space Heater Safety Tips

Regarding space heaters, they should have **an automatic shut-off feature that cuts the power if the heater is accidentally tipped over**. Many older space heaters do not have this shut-off and can overheat and start a fire if tipped over.

This is something to check when conducting your office safety inspections.

Make sure that any space heaters are surrounded by at least three feet of empty space.

Never place clothing or any other objects on a space heater to dry.

Do not place space heaters near furniture or drapery.

Turn space heaters off when you leave the house or go to bed.

Avoid storing any combustible items near heaters.

### Fireplace Safety Tips

Get your chimney inspected each year to make sure that it is safe.

Hire a chimney sweep to clean out your chimney every fall.

Repair any cracks in fireplaces.

Use fireplace screens to keep sparks and fire debris inside the fireplace.

Do not ever use gasoline to start a fire in the fireplace.

Never leave a fire unattended.

Make sure that combustible materials are not stored within three feet of your fireplace.

For natural gas fireplaces, get all connections and lines inspected before use each season.

Remember that outdoor fireplaces can be just as dangerous as indoor units, and observe all safety precautions when using them.

### Fire Safety Tips for Holiday Decorations

Use only fire retardant holiday decorations.

Verify that all holiday lights and extension cords have been tested by an organization such as Factory Mutual or Underwriters Laboratory.

### Family Fire Safety Tips

Teach your kids how to respond in the event of a fire.

Make sure young children know how to dial 911.

Establish and practice a fire escape plan with your family that includes a designated meeting area outside the home.

Practice stop, drop and roll with your children so they learn how to escape beneath a fire.

Teach everyone in your family multiple ways to escape from every room in the event of a fire.

Make sure that there is a sufficient quantity of **smoke detectors** in your home.

Verify each month that **smoke detectors** are in working order.

Make sure everyone in your family knows how to use a **fire extinguisher**.

Do not place lit candles where they can be reached by children.

Never leave burning candles unattended.

Do not leave candles burning when you go to sleep.

Don't leave cooking food unattended on the stove.

Keep everything that might be flammable away from your stove.

Make sure all flammable substances are properly stored in safe containers and out of reach of youngsters.

### **Outdoor Fall Fire Safety Tips**

Clear your roof and gutters of unnecessary build up of debris, such as pine needles and leaves. Learn the outdoor burning regulations in your area, and do not engage in illegal burning of leaves and other outdoor debris.

### **Safety Matters**

There is nothing more important than the safety of your family. Everyone in your home needs to know how to behave responsibly to reduce the likelihood of experiencing a fire. However, because fires can start at any time without warning, it is also very important that the members of your household know how to react in the event of a fire. It's a good idea to review fire prevention and safety tips with your family every fall, and several other times throughout the year.

### **Christmas Giving Ideas**

Give your loved ones a safety gift every holiday season. Ideas: Fire retardant Christmas Tree and/or ornaments; smoke detector(s); carbon monoxide detectors; fire extinguishers for the home and vehicles; first aid kits; - You think of other safety gifts to give for the safety of your family members.

Keep Safe!