

New Hampshire State Fire Marshal's Office

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: December 5, 2008
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TIPS FOR A FIRE SAFE WINTER

Protect your family and your property during the heating season by following these simple fire safety tips. According to New Hampshire State Fire Marshal Bill Degnan, heating systems are the most common cause of house fires in New Hampshire.

- Only use type of fuel listed for the appliance.
WARNING This office has learned that people have been considering using gasoline in the fuel oil tanks because it is cheaper than fuel oil. That is a recipe for disaster. Gasoline is more volatile than fuel oil and can cause an explosion and fire.
- Have each heating appliance serviced every year by a trained technician. This will improve the efficiency of your heating system as well as its safety.
- Install furnaces or other heating appliances in accordance with manufacturer's instructions and the State Fire Code.
- Plug electric space heaters directly into the outlet. Keep furniture and draperies at least 36 inches from the heater.
- As a rule of thumb, provide 36" of clearance between a wood heating appliance and any combustible surface or material.
- If you aren't sure your heating system and chimney meet fire safety codes, ask your local fire department to inspect them.
- Use only dry, seasoned hardwood. If you are unsure about the rules for safe wood burning, consult your local fire officials for advice.
- Install a smoke detector on each level of your home. Check your smoke detectors at least once per month.
- Install at least one carbon monoxide detector in your home.
- Develop a fire escape plan and practice family fire drills.
- Coals in a pile of wood ashes can stay live for many days. Store wood ashes in a covered metal container set on a dirt or concrete surface at least 36" from any combustible surface or materials.

BE SAFE NOT A STATISTIC

For further information concerning fire safety, contact your local fire department or the State Fire Marshal's Office.