

Home Heating Safety Tips

Heating equipment is a leading cause of home fires during the fall and winter months. Two out of three reported home heating fires and associated deaths and injuries involved portable and fixed space heaters and related equipment, such as fireplaces and chimneys.

Baseboard Heaters:

Check baseboard heaters often and remove objects that have fallen on top or near the heater. Keep all furniture a safe distance from your heaters. Never block the flow of heat. Never permit electrical cords to drape across heaters. Always hire an experienced electrician to do any necessary repair work on your baseboard heaters.

Portable Heaters:

When shopping for portable heater, choose a model with:

1. Temperature controls,
2. An automatic shut-off device, and
3. A seal of approval from an independent testing laboratory, indicating that it has met basic safety standards. Keep portable heaters three feet away from anything that can burn. Always place portable heaters on flat surfaces. Always turn the heater off when you leave the room or go to sleep. Avoid using household extension cords with portable heaters. If you must use an extension cord, make certain that it is a heavy-duty cord.

Fireplaces and Woodstoves:

1. Always use a fire screen to contain sparks.
2. Never burn rubbish.
3. Make certain anything flammable is kept a safe distance away from the fire.
4. Never leave fires unattended, especially in areas used by children or pets.
5. Clean out the ashes when cool and place in a metal container.

Just in Case:

If a fire occurs in your home, a working smoke alarm can save your life. Make certain smoke alarms are installed on every level of your home and outside every sleeping area. Test your smoke alarms monthly and change the batteries at least once a year. Everyone in your home should know what to do in the event of a fire. Plan and practice a home escape plan. Make sure everyone knows at least two ways out of every sleeping area. Decide upon a place outside the home where everyone will meet in the event of fire. Make certain everyone understands that once they have left a burning building they should never go back inside. **Call 911 from a safe area.**

POC is the JBM-HH Safety office at 703-696-3252.