

Your local volunteer Fire District would like to give you some REMINDERS this holiday season, and as we head into winter:

1) HOME HEATING: Home heating fires are becoming an increasingly serious problem in this community. Over the last few years, we have had some very serious incidents because of a lack of wood stove maintenance and related problems. (During one year alone recently, we had *five* flue fires due to the lack of proper maintenance.) Stove pipes and chimneys should always be cleaned at the beginning of wood-heating season, and periodically thereafter, depending on the type of wood burned, and the frequency of use.

Please heed these reminders:

- **CLEAN YOUR STOVE STACKS AND CHIMNEYS** immediately, if you haven't yet – or contact a qualified professional to do it, if you need to.
- Use **ONLY** a metal bucket for ashes, and locate it in a safe place, free from combustible material, for at least 24 hours before further disposal.
- Do not leave your stove unattended while the drafts are still open.
- Keep combustibles (clothing, shoes, paper, etc) at least 30 inches away from your stove, fireplace, or other heating unit.

More information about safe home heating operations, identifying creosote buildup, what you can do immediately if a flue fire occurs, general home fire safety, and a list of local professionals offering stovepipe/chimney cleaning services, is available under 'Stove and Flue Fires: Prevention and Handling,' at www.crfd.org.

Related issues:

- Recent statistics show that **UNATTENDED CANDLE USE** is now the number one cause of home fires in the United States. If you use candles, you need to recognize that this creates a potential fire danger in your home similar to that of other fire sources. Candles should be used only on stable, non-flammable surfaces, with proper, safe clearance from anything nearby that could ignite. *Above all, burning candles should not be left unattended.* It only takes an instant for the unexpected to interact with an open candle flame to start a house fire. If you're using a candle and need to leave the room, even "just for a moment," make sure it's out first.
 - Do NOT leave home with the **clothes dryer** still on. **Overheating** is an all-too-common problem. To lessen this fire danger, **clean your dryer lint filters** (lint traps) often, and clean the dryer duct (the vent to the outside) at least once a year.
 - Make sure that all **electrical appliances** are *turned off before you leave* your residence for any length of time.
- 2)** If you haven't done it recently, this is also a very important time of year to **REPLACE ALL OF YOUR SMOKE DETECTOR BATTERIES**. **MANY HOME FIRES ARE DISCOVERED TOO LATE, NOT BECAUSE THERE ARE NO SMOKE DETECTORS, BUT BECAUSE THE BATTERIES HAVE FAILED.**

Consider the difference between potentially losing your home, irreplaceable items, and possibly much more, versus a few dollars' worth of fresh batteries that, *once installed*, can significantly enhance your home fire protection and help prevent tragic loss. Do this today!!

3) REVIEW OUR WINTER EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & SURVIVAL PAMPHLET and use it to plan for the coming season (available on our website, linked on the Bulletin page).

We strongly encourage you to re-familiarize yourself with all of this information, and the many tips for home safety, home emergency preparedness, road safety and emergencies, and other potential wintertime problems; you can customize the checklist to plan for your own needs.

4) PLEASE KEEP YOUR RESIDENCES AS ACCESSIBLE AS POSSIBLE DURING THE WINTER. Despite our best efforts, fire district response time can be complicated by snow/ ice on roads and at residences. If we can't reach you during a fire or medical situation, we may not be able to help you at all.

- If there isn't enough width on your road now for two vehicles to pass, even a few strategic turnouts would help; turn-around space at your residence is likewise needed.
- Also, with the La Nina (wetter, colder) weather pattern in this winter's forecast, we also ask you to evaluate potentially hazardous trees and branches near or over your driveway and/or access road that could fall under a snow load. Trim or thin these as necessary, ahead of time. (As always, hire professionals if you need to; if you need assistance with this, call us.)

Your participation in preparedness and prevention is always your best defense.
Thank you for helping us to help you.

For further information, see www.crfd.org or call us at **(541) 488-1768**. We wish you all peaceful holidays and a fire-safe winter.