



NEWS RELEASE

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(Winter Storm Forecasts Prompt Fire District to Issue Safety Tips)

With several winter storms predicted for this region and the potential for power outages, Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue has concerns about individuals heating their home with alternative heat sources. With the holidays a week away, homes are now filled with highly flammable Christmas trees and decorations that could ignite in seconds from a stray fireplace spark or candle flame. Public Information Officer Karen Eubanks states, "At this time it is imperative that individuals use caution when heating and lighting their home in the wake of a power outage."

TVF&R offers the following tips on the safe use of alternative heating sources:

- If using a fireplace or woodstove, check to ensure the flue is unobstructed and the damper is open. Always use a tight-fitting fireplace screen or glass doors to contain burning embers.
- Keep a close eye on your fire and keep it manageable. A fire that grows too large and hot can result in a chimney fire. Also, ensure your fire is extinguished before going to bed or leaving your home.
- Never use gasoline or lighter fluid to start a fire.
- Keep combustible materials (Christmas tree, furniture, paper, etc.) at least three feet away from fireplaces, woodstoves, and all heating devices.
- Ashes can rekindle and start a fire. Wait several days before cleaning out your fireplace or woodstove or dispose of ashes in a metal container with a lid, placed outside your home.
- Candles are a fire hazard – use only flashlights, battery-operated lanterns, and light sticks as emergency lighting in your home.
- Never use outdoor equipment including propane or kerosene heaters or charcoal barbecues inside a home due to the risk of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. CO is a colorless, odorless and tasteless gas that claims hundreds of lives every year.
- Gas-fueled generators must be used outside in a well-ventilated area to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning. Read and follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully before using a generator.
- Check your smoke alarms to ensure they are working and install a carbon monoxide detector as a precaution.

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