



NEWS RELEASE

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Cold Weather and Wind Prompts Fire District to Issue Safety Tips

With prolonged below-freezing temperatures predicted for this region and the potential for power outages due to high winds, Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue has concerns about individuals heating their home with alternative heat sources. This may also be more of an issue this year as people try to save money due to the economy.

A recent survey conducted by the National Fire Protection Association and the American Red Cross indicated that in light of increasing heating costs and a suffering economy, 48% of the households surveyed will use an alternative heating source to reduce their bills this winter. Alternative heating sources include portable space heaters, stoves, ovens and fireplaces. A third (36%) of people with fireplaces reported they never cleaned or inspected their chimneys.

“It’s cold and some will choose to heat their homes with fireplaces or stoves,” says TVF&R Public Information Officer Brian Barker, “we just want to remind people to use caution when heating or lighting your home.”

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.