



ALTERNATIVE HEATING SAFETY

Alternative heating equipment is responsible for approximately 19 percent of fire-related deaths in the country. The majority of fires related to these devices are reported during the winter months of December, January and February. Alternative heating sources should be the last option used by an individual, but if they can't be avoided, caution should be practiced.

SPACE HEATERS AND OTHER ALTERNATIVES

Space heaters and other forms of alternative heating can be a helpful way to keep homes warmer during the winter, but they can also be extremely dangerous. Follow these safety tips whenever one of these options are used.

- If a space heater is necessary, consider purchasing one with a built-in tilt sensor.
- Keep at least a 3 foot perimeter around space heaters at all times. The space prevents the chances of something getting caught and catching on fire.
- Space heaters should be kept away from loose or flammable objects (clothing, curtains, bedding and furniture). They can get caught in the heater and catch on fire.
- Only one space heater should be plugged into each electrical outlet.
- Do not leave space heaters on in unoccupied rooms.
- Refuel kerosene space heaters outside the home in a well-ventilated area and only when they are cool.
- Only manufacturer specified fuel can be used in gasoline-powered heaters.
- Appliances such as ovens should never be used for heating because it can lead carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Any alternative heating sources need to be turned off before going to bed or leaving the home.



FIREPLACES

- Fireplaces should be regularly cleaned and inspected by a certified professional.
- Gas fireplaces should have proper ventilation, with a working carbon monoxide detector nearby.
- Use only dry, seasoned firewood to prevent buildup of creosote- a buildup on chimney walls of a flammable tar deposited from wood smoke.
- Do not close the damper too early when hot ashes are still in the fireplace. This can lead carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Avoid using flammable liquid to start fires in fireplaces or wood stoves.
- Always have a fire extinguisher on hand in the event the fire gets out of control.
- Fires should always be extinguished before going to bed or leaving the home.
- Cool ashes should be stored in a metal container located a safe distance outside of the home.

OTHER OPTIONS

In some cases, small changes can reduce the need for alternative heating sources.

- Wearing long underwear will reduce the loss of body heat and enhance warmth and comfort.
- Caulk can stop drafts and decrease heat loss.
- Staying active indoors can help with increasing bodily warmth.
- Using the oven to cook dinner will provide some residual heat.

