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FIRE DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JANUARY 29, 2024

BE PREPARED – USING HEATING EQUIPMENT SAFELY

The following is one in a series of Community Risk Reduction articles presented by the Muscatine Fire Department.

MUSCATINE, Iowa - Heating equipment is one of the leading causes of home fire deaths with Fire Departments responding to an estimated average of 44,210 fires per year (from 2016-2020) involving heating equipment. That accounts for 13 percent of all reported home fires during this time period, and has resulted in an annual loss of 480 civilian deaths.

HEATING FIRE FACTS

Based on 2016-2020 annual averages:

- Space heaters were the type of heating equipment responsible for the largest share of losses in home heating equipment fires, accounting for one-third of the fires, but nearly





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nine out of 10 deaths and four out of five of the injuries in home fires caused by heating equipment.

- Fires originating in a kitchen or cooking area accounted for the largest share of home heating fires (17 percent).
- While the larger (non-confined) fires involving fireplaces or chimneys were involved in less than one in 10 fires caused by heating equipment (seven percent), they caused just over one-fifth of the direct property damage (22 percent).
- Nearly half of the heating equipment fires (46 percent) occurred in the three-month period from December through February.

Source: NFPA Research Division

BE WARM AND SAFE THIS WINTER

- Keep anything that can burn at least three-feet (one metre) away from heating equipment, like the furnace, fireplace, wood stove, or portable space heater.
- Have a three-foot (one meter) "kid-free zone" around open fires and space heaters.
- Never use your oven to heat your home.
- Have a qualified professional install stationary space heating equipment, water heaters or central heating equipment according to the local codes and manufacturer's instructions.
- Have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year by a qualified professional.
- Remember to turn portable heaters off when leaving the room or going to bed.
- Always use the right kind of fuel, specified by the manufacturer, for fuel burning space heaters.
- Make sure the fireplace has a sturdy screen to stop sparks from flying into the room. Ashes should be cool before putting them in a metal container. Keep the container a safe distance away from your home.



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- Test smoke alarms at least once a month.
- Install and maintain CO alarms to avoid the risk of CO poisoning. If you smell gas in your gas heater, do not light the appliance. Leave the home immediately and call your local fire department or gas company

[Heating Safety \(PDF\)](#)

[Portable Heater Safety \(PDF\)](#)

[Portable Fireplace Safety \(PDF\)](#)