

CITY OF MUSCATINE



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USE SECONDARY HOME HEATING EQUIPMENT SAFELY

MUSCATINE, Iowa – Some of the coldest temperatures of the winter will blanket the Muscatine area starting Sunday and the Muscatine Fire Department reminds residents of some very important safety tips.

The National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA) noted that heating equipment is one of the leading causes of home fire deaths. Fire Departments responded to an estimated average of 40,997 fires involving heating equipment per year from 2018-2022, accounting for 12 percent of all reported home fires during this time, and resulted in an annual loss of 470 civilian deaths.



Heating Safety

There is something about the winter months and curling up with a good book by the fireplace. But did you know that heating equipment is one of the leading causes of home fire deaths? With a few simple safety tips and precautions you can prevent most heating fires from happening.

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 metre) "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.
- Test smoke alarms at least once a month.

Heating Equipment Smarts

Install wood burning stoves following manufacturer's instructions or have a professional do the installation. All fuel-burning equipment should be vented to the outside to avoid carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning.

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.

FACT

Half of home heating fires are reported during the months of December, January, and February.



NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION
The leading information and knowledge resource on fire, electrical and related hazards



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According to NFPA, heating equipment is the leading cause of U.S. home fires between December and January, while cooking equipment is the leading cause of home fires year-round. The third-leading cause of home fires is electrical equipment, with three in 10 electrical fires occurring between November and February. Also, more than a third (34 percent) of Christmas tree home fires occur in January.

HEATING FIRE FACTS

Based on 2018-2022 annual averages:

- Space heaters and heating stoves were the type of heating equipment responsible for the largest share of losses in home heating equipment fires, accounting for nearly half (46 percent) of the fires, but nearly eight out of 10 deaths (76 percent) and seven out of 10 (72 percent) 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 (18 percent).
- While the larger (non-confined) fires involving fireplaces or chimneys were involved in fewer than one in 10 fires caused by heating equipment (eight percent), they caused just over one-fourth of the direct property damage (27 percent).
- Nearly half of the heating equipment fires (46 percent) occurred in the three-month period from December through February.

Source: NFPA Research Division

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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.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY:

- Only use one heat-producing appliance (such as a coffee maker, toaster, space heater, etc.) plugged into a receptacle outlet at a time.
- Check electrical cords to make sure they are not running across doorways or under carpets.
- Extension cords are intended for temporary use. Have a qualified electrician add more receptacle outlets so you don't have to use extension cords.

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- Call a qualified electrician or your landlord if you have frequent problems with blowing fuses or tripping circuit breakers; a tingling feeling when you touch an electrical appliance; a discolored or warm wall outlet; a burning or rubbery smell coming from an appliance; flickering or dimming lights; or sparks from an outlet.

COOKING SAFETY:

- Keep a close eye on what you're cooking; never leave cooking food unattended. For foods with longer cook times, such as those that are simmering or baking, set a timer to help monitor them carefully.
- Clear the cooking area of combustible items, keeping anything that can burn - such as dish towels, oven mitts, food packaging, and paper towels - at least three feet away from cooking equipment.
- Turn pot handles toward the back of the stove.
- Keep a lid nearby when cooking. If a small grease fire starts, slide the lid over the pan and turn off the burner.
- Create a "kid and pet free zone" of at least three feet around the cooking area and anywhere else hot food or drink is prepared or carried.