

Colder temperatures prompt reminder to be fire safe when heating your home

December 19, 2021



With the cold months of winter upon the state of Oregon, the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal would like to remind people to be safe when it comes to keeping warm and heating their homes.

In 2020, heating was the number two cause of home structure fires in Oregon. Firefighters across the state responded to 487 home structure fires or 17% of all fires where the cause was determined to be from heating

“As the temperatures drop and winter weather encourages us to spend more time inside it is important to heat your home safely,” Assistant Chief Deputy Claire McGrew said. “Every winter across the state we see house fires that could have been prevented. We want to remind Oregonians of simple home heating tips to protect themselves and their families this winter.”

When heating your home, the OSFM offers the following tips:

All Heating Types

Use heating equipment that has the label of a recognized testing laboratory.

Keep things that burn, such as paper, curtains, bedding, or furniture, at least three feet away from all heating equipment, including fireplaces, wood stoves, and pellet stoves.

Keep a three-foot “kid and pet-free zone” around all heating equipment.

Heaters

Use newer, portable space heaters with an automatic shut-off so they will shut off if they’re tipped over.

Clean them each year before using them and check for product recalls.

Unplug portable space heaters when not in use, before going to bed, or leaving the room.

Make sure fuel-burning heaters are designed for indoor use and are properly ventilated. Heaters not designed for indoor use pose a carbon monoxide risk.

Plug portable heaters directly into wall outlets, never into a power strip or extension cord.

Wood and Pellet-Burning Heating Equipment (fireplaces, wood stoves, pellet stoves)

Maintain heating equipment and chimneys by having them cleaned and inspected at least once a year by a qualified professional.

With wood stoves and fireplaces, burn only dry, seasoned wood. In pellet stoves, burn only dry, seasoned pellets.

Make sure the fireplace has a sturdy screen to stop sparks from escaping.

Place ashes in a metal container, soak with water and keep them at least 10 feet away from the home or anything that can burn. Dispose of the ash only after it is cool.

Another item OSFM asks Oregonians to do is check their smoke and carbon monoxide alarms monthly. These alarms should be installed on every level of your home (including the basement), inside each bedroom, and in the hallway outside each bedroom. Working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms save lives.