



News Release

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OHIOANS URGED TO PREVENT AND PREPARE FOR FIRES DURING WINTER MONTHS

Safe and Sound campaign aims to decrease winter home fires and increase public awareness.

As the temperatures begin to drop and we start spending more time indoors, State Fire Marshal Larry L. Flowers and Chief John C. Reese of the North Ridgeville Fire Department are asking all Ohioans to take the steps necessary to prevent and prepare for a fire emergency. During the heating season, there is an increased risk of fires often due to the use of alternative heating sources. Taking necessary precautions can save your life and the lives of your loved ones.

“We hope no Ohioans ever experience a house fire, but the reality is that it will happen to too many. That’s why everyone needs to be prepared to stop fire before it starts,” Marshal Flowers said. “And if they do start, a working smoke alarm and two ways out of your home can help get your family to safety.”

“You also have less of a risk of a fire if you actively try to prevent one from starting,” Chief Reese said. “Paying attention to any heat sources and materials that can burn are two of surest steps you can take to prevent the loss of life.”

Marshal Flowers, Chief Reese and the U.S. Fire Administration offer these tips:

PREPARING FOR A FIRE

Smoke Alarms

- Make sure that your home’s smoke alarms are in proper working order.
- All smoke alarms should be tested monthly. All batteries should be replaced with new ones twice a year.
- Some smoke alarms may be dependent on your home's electrical service and may not work during a power outage. Check to see if your smoke alarm uses a back-up battery and if so, install a new battery twice a year.
- Smoke alarms should be installed on every level of your home, and inside and outside bedrooms.
- Smoke alarms should be replaced every 10 years.

Fire Escape Plan

- Develop a home fire escape plan with a primary and secondary route.
- Practice the escape drill twice, once using the normal exits and then the alternative route.
- To start the drill, set off a smoke alarm by pushing the test button.
- Family members should sound their own alarm at the first sign of fire. Yelling or pounding on walls are examples.
- Always test the doors for heat before opening. Sweep your hand over the upper portion of the door to feel for heat. If the door is hot or warm, do not open it. Instead use your alternative route. If the door does not feel hot to the touch, open the door a crack to see if there is smoke. If there is

no smoke, exit the house. If you find heavy smoke, close the door and use your alternative escape route.

- Stay as low as possible to avoid rising smoke.
- Close doors behind you when escaping a room or building that is on fire.
- Go to the designated meeting place outside.
- Call for help once outside.

PREVENTING FIRES

Heating Safety

- Use kerosene heaters and space heaters according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Alternative heaters need their space. Keep anything that could burn at least three feet away.
- Make sure your alternative heaters have 'tip switches.' These 'tip switches' are designed to automatically turn off the heater in the event they tip over.
- Do not use the kitchen oven range to heat your home. In addition to being a fire hazard, it can be a source of toxic fumes.
- Never refill a space heater while it is operating or still hot.
- Only refuel heaters outdoors.
- Make sure wood stoves are properly installed, and at least three feet away from anything that can burn. Ensure they have the proper floor support and adequate ventilation and your chimney is clean.

Cooking Safety

- Stay in the kitchen when you are cooking on the stovetop so you can keep an eye on the food.
- Stay in the home when cooking your Thanksgiving or holiday turkey and check on it frequently.
- Keep children away from the stove. The stove will be hot and kids should stay 3 feet away.
- Make sure kids stay away from hot food and liquids. The steam or splash from vegetables, gravy or coffee could cause serious burns.
- Keep the floor clear so you don't trip over kids, toys, pocketbooks or bags when handling hot foods.
- Be sure electric cords from an electric knife, coffee maker, plate warmer or mixer are not dangling off the counter within easy reach of a child.

Additional Tips

- Be careful when using candles. Keep the flame away from anything that can burn and out of the reach of children.
- Consider using battery-operated flameless candles, which can look, smell and feel like real candles.
- When using candles, place them in sturdy, safe candleholders that will not burn or tip over.
- Never use a candle where medical oxygen is being used.
- Always use a flashlight, not a candle for emergency lighting.
- If the power goes out, make certain that all electrical appliances, such as stoves, electric space heaters and hair dryers, are in the OFF position.
- If there is a fire hydrant near your home, keep it clear of snow, ice and debris for fast access by the fire department.