

A Few Winter Safety Tips!

Keeping Your Home Safe And Warm

Follow these safety tips from CDC, the National Fire Protection Association, and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission to prevent injuries and deaths related to heating your home.

- Install a smoke alarm near bedrooms and on each floor of your home. Test it monthly. If it has a 9-volt battery, change the battery once a year.
- Install a carbon monoxide (CO) alarm near bedrooms and on each floor of your home. If your alarm sounds, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission suggests that you press the reset button, call emergency services (911 or your local fire department), and immediately move to fresh air (either outdoors or near an open door or window). Know the symptoms of CO poisoning: headache, fatigue, dizziness, and shortness of breath. If you experience any of these symptoms, get fresh air right away and contact a doctor for proper diagnosis.
- Make sure heating equipment is installed properly. Have a trained specialist inspect and tune up your heating system each year.
- Keep portable space heaters at least 3 feet from anything that can burn, including bedding, furniture, and clothing. Never drape clothing over a space heater to dry.
- Keep children and pets away from space heaters. Never leave children in a room alone when a space heater is in use.
- If you use a kerosene heater, use only the fuel recommended by the manufacturer. Never put gasoline in a kerosene heater--it could explode. Before you refuel the heater, turn it off and let it cool down. Refuel outside only.
- When using a kerosene heater, keep a door open to the rest of the house or open a window slightly. This will reduce the chance of carbon monoxide build-up in the room.
- Have your fireplace chimney and flue inspected each year and cleaned if needed. Open the flue and use a sturdy fireplace screen when you have a fire. Burn only untreated wood; never burn paper or pine branches--pieces can float out the chimney and ignite your roof, a neighbor's roof, or nearby trees.
- If you use a wood-burning stove, have the chimney connection and flue checked each year. Make sure the stove is placed on an approved stove board to protect the floor from heat and coals.
- Never use your range or oven to heat your home, even for a short time.

Driving Safely In Winter Weather

Snow, ice, and extreme cold can make driving treacherous. These safety tips from CDC, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and the National Safety Council can help make winter car travel safer.

- Before winter arrives, have your car tuned up, check the level of antifreeze, make sure the battery is good, and check your tire tread or put on snow tires.
- Keep emergency gear in your car for everyday trips:
 - cell phone
 - flashlight
 - jumper cables
 - sand or kitty litter (for traction)
 - ice scraper, snow brush, and small shovel
 - blankets
 - warning devices (e.g., flares, reflectors)
- For long car trips, keep food, water, extra blankets, and required medication on hand.
- Avoid driving in snow or ice storms. If you must travel in bad weather, drive slowly. Let someone know what route you're taking and when you plan to arrive so they can alert authorities if you don't get there.
- If your car is parked outside, make sure the exhaust pipe and the area around it are free of snow before you start the car. Snow packed in or around the exhaust pipe can cause high levels of carbon monoxide in the car.
- Don't sit in a parked car with the engine running unless a window is open. Do not let your car run while parked in a garage.
- If your car stalls or gets stuck in snow, light two flares and place one at each end of the car, a safe distance away. Make sure snow has not blocked the exhaust pipe. Then stay in your vehicle and open a window slightly to let in fresh air. Wrap yourself in blankets and run your vehicle's heater for a few minutes every hour to keep warm.