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 a leading cause 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**

- Space heaters have 1 function - to provide **supplemental heat**.
- Do not use them to thaw frozen pipes, dry clothing, cook food or warm bedding.
- Keep anything combustible at least 3' away from heating equipment, like the furnace, fireplace, wood stove, or portable space heater.
- Maintain a 3' “kid-free zone” around open fires and space heaters.
- Never plug a space heater into an extension cord or power strip, plug directly into an electrical outlet.
- Always run the power cord of a portable heater carefully so that no one steps on or trips over it.
- Turn off the heater when you leave the room; **UNPLUG** the heater when you leave for the day.
- **DO NOT** place electric heaters in bathrooms.
- When buying space heaters look for devices with automatic shut-off features, heating element guards and a UL or FM Mark on the product.
- Never use your oven to heat your home.
- Have a qualified professional install fixed space heating equipment, water heaters or central heating equipment according to the local codes and manufacturer’s instructions.
- Have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned & inspected every year by a qualified professional.
- 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.
- Always use the right kind of fuel specified by the manufacturer, for fuel burning space heaters.
- Do not use portable propane or kerosene space heaters indoors or in any confined space unless they are specifically designed for indoor use.

**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.

**FACTS**

- Roughly **two thirds** of home fire deaths happen in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms.
- Working smoke alarms cut the risk of dying in reported home fires in **half**.

- An estimated 900 portable space heater fires are reported to U.S. fire departments annually and cause an estimated 70 fatalities, 150 injuries and 53 million dollars in property loss.

- 52% of portable space heater fires that occur in residential buildings are the result of combustibles too close to the heater.

- In 38% of portable space heater fires in residential buildings the room of origin is the bedroom.

**Space Heater Fires Peak in the Month of January**