



city of
greenville

News Release

GREENVILLE CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT URGING FIRE SAFETY DURING COLD WEATHER

(Greenville SC) Since winter seems to have finally arrived, the Greenville City Fire Department (GCFD) is asking for the public's help to prevent winter fires. According to state and federal fire authorities, home fires occur more in winter than in any other season and fire deaths increase about 63% in the winter months (December-March). Winter home fires occur mainly in the early evening hours, peaking between 5 p.m. and 8 p.m., and heating equipment is involved in one of every six reported home fires and one in every five home fire deaths. "While the statistics are frightening, nearly all of these fires are preventable," said GCFD firefighter Tristan Johnson. "We can reduce the number of winter fires in our community just by taking some simple precautions and using heating equipment properly."

As a result, GCFD is urging residents to follow the safety tips below and to check on friends, neighbors and the elderly, who may be vulnerable to fire-related tragedy during the winter months.

Fire Safety Tips:

- Test your smoke alarms once a month to make sure they work. Replace any that do not work or that are more than 10-years-old.
- Install and maintain carbon monoxide (CO) alarms to avoid the risk of CO poisoning. Test them once a month.
- If there is a fire, get out and stay out. Call 911 as soon as you are safely outside.

Heating Safety:

- Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from heating equipment such as furnaces, fireplaces, wood stoves and portable space heaters.
- Keep kids and pets away from open fires and space heaters.
- Turn off portable heaters when leaving the room or going to bed.
- Never use an oven to heat your home.
- Only use heating equipment that bears the label of a recognized testing laboratory and has an automatic shut-off.
- Place space heaters on a solid, flat surface and keep them and their electrical cords away from flammable items, high traffic areas and doorways.
- Plug space heaters directly into wall outlets and never into an extension cord or power strip.
- Inspect space heaters for damaged cords, broken plugs or loose connections, and replace them before using the heater.
- If you use fuel-burning space heaters, use the proper fuel as specified by the manufacturer.

- When refueling, allow the appliance to cool first and then refuel outside.
- When using a fuel-burning space heater, open a window to ensure proper ventilation.
- If you smell gas in your gas heater, do not light the appliance. Leave the building **immediately and call 911.**
- Only use wood stoves that bear the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- Burn only dry, seasoned wood in wood stoves, and burn only dry, seasoned wood pellets in pellet stoves.
- Keep the doors of your wood stove closed unless loading or stoking the live fire.
- Allow ashes to cool before disposing of them. Place ashes in a tightly covered metal container and keep the ash container at least 10 feet away from the home and any other nearby buildings. Never empty the ash directly into a trash can. Douse and saturate the ashes with water.

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