



North Oakland County Fire Authority

Proudly Serving Holly and Rose Townships

Emergency Only - 911
Non emergency - 248-634-4511
Burn Permits - 248-634-2620
Fax - 248-634-3817

www.nocfa.org

Some Winter Time Fire Prevention Tips

- ❖ No single device has the potential to save more lives in homes than smoke alarms, especially when you are sleeping. Every single household should have at least one functioning smoke alarm. Test your smoke alarms monthly and change the batteries twice a year (a good rule of thumb is to change the batteries when you adjust your clocks for daylight savings time). The North Oakland County Fire Authority does offer free smoke detectors to its residents & will even install them if requested.
- ❖ During the winter months, there is greater opportunity for fires in homes because of heating devices. One of the most frequent calls the fire department responds to in the winter is chimney fires. Almost all chimney fires are caused by failure to clean and maintain the heating unit and the chimney system. It is very important to regularly clean your chimney (at least once a year) even if you only use it occasionally. You should also have your chimney inspected every year for cracks and other problems that may lead to fire. In the event of a chimney fire, call 911 and leave the house. Chimney fires can quickly turn into structure fires.
- ❖ Space heaters are another leading cause of house fires in the winter. Any type of heating device whether electric or fuel powered should be kept at least 3 feet from all combustibles (anything that can catch on fire). It is also not a good idea to leave space heaters unattended for long periods of time especially if you have pets in your home. There is always the chance that the heating device can get knocked over or something could get moved to close to the unit.
- ❖ Standard or central type gas fired furnaces also need regular maintenance. Filters should be changed out before you turn on your furnace for the season. It's a good idea to have the inside of the furnace vacuumed also before starting it up for the season. If you have ever turned on your furnace for the first time all season your probably familiar with that gassy, sooty smell that occurs. That smell is the burning of dust and debris that has collected inside the furnace all summer. The smell usually goes away after a few minutes but if the dust & debris is really built up, there is a chance of a fire starting in the ventilation ducts of your home. Finally, maintain at least a one foot clearance from combustibles around the outside of the furnace.
- ❖ Candles are another frequent cause of house fires. Candles are an open flame and can easily ignite anything that can burn. If you use candles make sure you use sturdy candle holders. Place candles on sturdy, uncluttered surfaces. Keep candles at least one foot from combustibles. You should always extinguish candles when you leave the room. Avoid using candles in the bedroom or other rooms where people may fall asleep.
- ❖ Dryer fires can happen at any time of the year. Almost all dryer fires are due to dirty lint filters or debris buildup in the exhaust tubes and vents. It is very important to keep the lint filter clean after each use. You should also frequently check the exhaust tube and the vent for debris buildup. Dryers that do not ventilate correctly build up lots of heat and can ignite a fire.
- ❖ Remember not to overload electrical wall outlets & do not use extension cords as permanent wiring.