

## **WINTER FIRE SAFETY IN THE HOME**

The Township Committee and The Wyckoff Volunteer Fire Department would like to urge local residents to keep their home firesafe during these colder months.

Winter is the time of year for using fireplaces and wood burning stoves around the home. These items add to our winter enjoyment. But using them correctly and safely is critical.

Here are some important tips:

- Wood stoves should be of good quality, solid construction, and UL-listed.
- The stove or fireplace should be properly installed by a qualified professional. Stoves should have adequate clearance from all combustible surfaces, along with adequate floor support and protection.
- The chimney should be inspected yearly and cleaned as necessary. The chimney should always be inspected if it has not been used in some time.
- Do not use flammable or combustible liquids to start or accelerate a fire.
- Keep a metal or glass screen in front of the fireplace opening to keep sparks and embers from jumping out on to the floor surface.
- Do not burn charcoal indoors. Burning charcoal gives off large amounts of carbon monoxide.
- Keep flammable materials away from the stove, fireplace, and mantel. Remember that many craft-type items are highly flammable and can be ignited by one spark.
- Do not burn large amounts of paper in a fireplace. A roaring fire can ignite creosote in the chimney.
- Be sure that fireplace fire is out before retiring for the evening. Do not close the damper if there are hot ashes in the fireplace closed damper can reheat the fire and force carbon monoxide into the house.
- Do not place ashes in combustible containers. Store the correct container outdoors and away from any weeds or structures.

Be sure your standard furnace is in good operating condition and that its flue is not clogged or loose. Doing so will not only ensure safe operation, but it will also increase your furnace's efficiency and minimize carbon monoxide exposure.

Test your smoke detectors monthly. If they are battery-operated, change the batteries yearly. There should be at least one detector on each level of your home, including the basement.

Plan ahead! Have an emergency exit drill in place. Review and practice it with your family. Establish a meeting place outside the house so you can account for everyone in case of emergency.

With a few simple steps and common sense, we can safely enjoy this winter season.