



## WOOD HEATING SAFETY

The kids are back in school, the leaves are turning color and the mercury is dropping. Now is a good time to prepare for the heating season, before turning on the furnace.

During the winter, accidental fires are more common and can quickly burn down an entire residence. This is especially true for homes in the rural area, where fire department response times are longer. Heating systems are one of the main causes of winter fires. Wood burning appliances, such as stoves, fireplaces or furnaces, can be more problematic unless extra precaution is used.

Most often, unintended fires result from poorly maintained or improperly installed wood burning appliances. To avoid experiencing a fire loss from a wood burning appliance, consider the following:

### CHIMNEYS

- » Hire a professional to properly clean and inspect the chimney.
- » Remove all visible creosote. It is the leading cause of chimney fires.
- » Repair any deficiencies, especially if the chimney flue is cracked or damaged.
- » If a metal chimney was removed, reinstall it, along with a spark arrestor (chimney cap).



photo - Flicker CCL

### WOOD BURNING APPLIANCE

- » Hire a professional to perform an annual inspection of your wood burning stove, fireplace or furnace.
- » Repair or replace damaged, weakened or deficient appliances.
- » Move all combustibles a safe distance away (at least 36 inches) from the appliance, including the wood supply, unless otherwise specified by the manufacturer.
- » Burn only well-seasoned hard wood. Unseasoned wood, paper and garbage drastically increases creosote development, which can lead to a chimney fire.
- » Store flammable liquids away from the wood heating system, in a separate enclosed area.
- » If using a boiler, check for proper fluid levels in the system.
- » Remove ashes with a metal bucket and lid. Immediately take ashes outside spreading them a safe distance away from all buildings and combustible material.

### BE PREPARED

- » Install smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors on each floor.
- » Replace batteries in existing smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors.
- » Keep a current 10lb fire extinguisher near the wood burning appliance.

## {KEEP WARM – KEEP SAFE}

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