

Winter Fire Safety Tips

The weather outside is frightful... and the fire is so delightful... (as long as the fire is contained in your fireplace!)

Fire Safety

It may be the most wonderful time of the year for a lot of people, but the cold weather brings some concerns with it. Unexpected events that require the aid of a restoration company in the winter are often related to ice damage and flooded basements; but actually, house fires could be the highest risk facing your home this winter. In fact, winter is the season when house fires are most common. As the temperature drops, your desire to stay toasty, cozy and safe inside with your family increases, and your next focus should be winter fire safety. Here are our best winter fire safety tips that will help you avoid the stress of dealing with fire damage or smoke removal.

Tips to Avoid House Fires in the Winter

House fires are more common in the winter than any other season. Most people don't realize how their day-to-day decisions increase the chances of a disaster happening in their home. We have laid out some causes of home fires and how you can take action to improve your winter fire safety.

Electrical Appliances - Common Threat

About half of all electrical home fires involve electrical failures or malfunctions in appliances. Cords of appliances that are frayed and old can easily cause fires.

Prevention Tips

Replace appliances with damaged cords immediately and do not run cords under furniture or rugs.

Cooking - Common Threat

Cooking left unattended is one of the most common causes of house fires.

Prevention Tips

Always stay in the kitchen while you're cooking and even if you leave the room for a short period, turn off the stove. If you are using a barbecue grill outside, position the grill at least ten feet away from the siding of your home and deck railings.

Carbon Monoxide - Common Threat

Carbon monoxide is a non-fire incident, but it is popular during winter months. Carbon monoxide is an invisible killer caused when fuels from gasoline, wood, coal, natural gas, propane, oil, and methane burn incompletely.

Prevention Tips

Heating and cooking appliances that burn fuel are potential sources of carbon monoxide. The poisoning is difficult to recognize, so install carbon monoxide alarms in your home to avoid this silent killer.

Fireplaces - Common Threat

You are probably using your fireplace more frequently in the winter months to help keep you and your family warm. Fireplaces produce creosote which can easily ignite and cause more fire and smoke and lead to a potential disaster in your home.

Prevention Tips

Before you start using it more regularly, check for any damages to your fireplace and make sure it is clean. Always make sure the fire is completely out before leaving the room or your home.

Smoke - Common Threat

It may seem obvious to have working smoke alarms in your home, but 62 percent of home fire deaths resulted from fires in homes with inoperable smoke alarms or no smoke alarms at all.

Prevention Tips

Test your smoke alarms and make sure the batteries are fresh and working properly.

Winter causes headaches for all of us but preparing for potential winter disasters will relieve some stress during this time of year. Home fires are preventable, and there is never too much you can do to protect your home and your family. Keep these tips in mind to maintain your winter fire safety. Even in our best efforts to prevent disasters from happening, they still can occur when we least expect it.

Be Smart

This doesn't just mean to be intelligent and make wise choices (like reading the manufacturer's guidelines instead of just throwing them away). It means using devices like smart smoke detectors and wall outlets. Smart smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors take much of the guessing out of fire safety. They send alerts directly to your phone, can be managed from an app and monitor their own battery life. Smart wall outlets also bring your home's fire safety into the 21st century. They can automatically turn off devices such as toasters and coffeemakers that are notorious fire starters, so they are a great way to start fireproofing your kitchen (and the rest of your home as well).

Space Heater Safety Tips

With getting into the coldest time of the year, many people are turning to space heaters as a supplement to their heating systems. Space heaters are a portable and easy way to quickly make even the coldest room warm and comfy. However, they do come with some risks and need to be treated with care. Below are a few tips to keep in mind when using a portable heater.

Never use extension cords with a portable heater. While it may be tempting to use an extension cord with your space heater to increase its portability, space heaters require more electricity than extension cords are designed to handle, so you should never plug your space heater into an extension cord.

Only use heaters that have a tip over switch. Some space heaters on the market today are built with a switch that automatically turns the heater off if it ever tips over.

Purchase safe heaters that have been approved by Underwriter Laboratories (UL,) a global safety consulting and certification company. Products with a UL certification have passed very stringent requirements and are proven to be trustworthy, so make sure you look for that when you're shopping for one.

Only use kerosene and propane heaters in ventilated areas

Keep combustible materials at least 24" away from all sides of the heater.

Do not leave the heater on when not in the room.

Never leave young children unattended near the heater.

Always read and follow the manufacturer's guidelines.

Holiday Candle Safety Tips

Candles may be pretty to look at but they are a cause of home fires — and home fire deaths. Remember, a candle is an open flame, which means that it can easily ignite anything that can burn. Here are some fire prevention tips.

Blow out all candles when you leave the room or go to bed. Avoid the use of candles in the bedroom and other areas where people may fall asleep.

Keep candles at least 12 inches away from anything that can burn.

Think about using flameless candles in your home. They look and smell like real candles.

If you do burn candles, make sure that you...

Use candle holders that are sturdy, and won't tip over easily.

Put candle holders on a sturdy, uncluttered surface.

Light candles carefully. Keep your hair and any loose clothing away from the flame.

Don't burn a candle all the way down — put it out before it gets too close to the holder or container.

Never use a candle if oxygen is used in the home.

Have flashlights and battery-powered lighting ready to use during a power outage. Never use candles.