

Help Prevent Fires with

Fireplace Safety



1. Have chimneys inspected annually, and cleaned as necessary, by a CSIA (Chimney Safety Institute of America) Certified Chimney Sweep. This reduces the risk of fires and carbon monoxide poisonings due to creosote buildup or obstructions in the chimneys. To locate a certified sweep, visit the CSIA Web site at www.csia.org or call 1-800-536-0118. A certified sweep can also perform maintenance on your wood stove or help remove gas logs from a fireplace.
2. Keep the top of chimneys clear of tree limbs or debris and install a chimney cap to keep debris and animals out of the chimney.
3. Always open the damper before lighting the fire and keep it open until the ashes are cool. This will avert the build-up of poisonous gases, such as carbon monoxide.
4. Fuel the fire safely. For burning firewood in wood stoves or fireplaces, choose well-seasoned wood that has been dried for a minimum of six months to a year and stored properly.
5. Never use gasoline, charcoal lighter or other fuel to light or relight a fire because the vapors can explode. Never keep flammable fuels near a fire. Vapors can travel the length of a room and explode.
6. Do not use coal or charcoal in a fireplace because of the danger of carbon monoxide build-up. Do not burn trash or gift wrap in the fireplace because polystyrene foam and other coated materials can generate deadly fumes. Flying paper embers could also ignite the roof.
7. Do not overload the fireplace. Large fires can lead to overheating of wall or roof materials, particularly if the fireplace is constructed of metal.
8. Always use a screen around the fireplace to keep sparks from flying out and to protect children and adults from accidental clothing ignition.
9. Keep flammable materials such as carpets, pillows, furniture or papers away from the fireplace area.
10. At holiday time, make sure the Christmas tree is not close enough to be ignited by a spark. Be especially careful of accidentally igniting holiday wrapping papers.
11. Always make sure that the fire is completely extinguished before going to bed for the night or when leaving the house.



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