



Heating Safety



Richmond Fire Prevention
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When cold weather approaches citizens need to prepare for cranking up the furnace and operating space heaters. It is time to call a professional heating specialist to inspect and tune up your fireplace and furnace. Here are a few tips to keep you & your family from being a fire statistic.

Fireplaces and Woodstoves

- Remember: Fireplaces contain open flames. It can easily ignite any combustibles nearby!
- Do not burn holiday wrapping papers in the fireplace. It can throw off dangerous sparks and cause a flash fire.
- Use only clean dry wood; do not burn trash.
- Use a metal container for ash removal and store it outside, away from combustibles such as a wood deck or leaves.
- Have your chimney cleaned regularly. Creosote buildup can cause a chimney fire which may spread to your house.
- Use fireplace screens to confine sparks and embers.
- Always supervise children when a fire is burning in the fireplace.

Space Heaters

- Remember - Space Heaters Need Space! Give **3 feet of clearance** in all directions.
- When selecting an alternative heater, look for one that has been tested and labeled by a nationally recognized testing laboratory such as Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) or Factory Mutual (FM).
- Read and follow the manufacturer's recommendations and warning labels on all appliances. Keep the owner's manual in a convenient place to refer to when needed.
- Make sure your alternative heaters have "tip switches." These "tip switches" are designed to automatically turn off the heater if the heater gets knocked over.
- Keep children and pets away from space heaters. Most heaters have very hot surfaces.
- Never use a space heater overnight in the room where you are sleeping. Dangerous levels of carbon monoxide could accumulate from fuel-fired heaters, or uncontrolled burning could cause a fire.
- Never use or store flammable liquids (such as gasoline) around a space heater. The flammable vapors can flow from one part of the room to another and be ignited by the open flame or by the electrical circuit of an electric heater.
- Place heaters at least three feet away from objects such as bedding, furniture and drapes. Never use heaters to dry clothes or shoes.
- Never leave a burning heater unattended. Extinguish your heater if you're leaving the room or area for more than a few minutes.
- Be sure the location you choose can be ventilated according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Do not place a heater in a doorway, hall, or walkway where it is likely to be bumped.

Kerosene Space Heaters

- Never use gasoline in a kerosene heater. Even small quantities of gasoline in the heater tank can cause a fire.
- Use only K-1 kerosene in kerosene heaters. Kerosene should be purchased from a dealer who can certify that it is K-1 grade kerosene. The fact that kerosene is "water clear" does not ensure that it is K-1, since both K-1 and K-2 can appear clear.
- Never fill the fuel tank of a kerosene heater beyond the full mark because as the fuel warms, it expands and could spill and cause a fire.
- Do not attempt to move the heater, remove the fuel tank, or refuel the heater when it is operating or is off but still hot.
- Always refuel heater outside a building.
- In case of flare-up or uncontrolled flaming occurs, do not attempt to move the heater. If your heater is equipped with a manual shut-off switch, activate the switch to turn off the heater. If activation of the shut-off switch does not extinguish the flame, leave the area and immediately call the fire department.
- Keep kerosene stored outside in a sealed blue container labeled "Kerosene."

Electric Heaters

- Never use your electric heater near water. Do not touch an electric heater if your hands are wet or you are in contact with water in any way. Never use an electric heater:
 - In a bathroom
 - In a damp basement
 - Near water
- Always unplug your heater when it is not in use.
- Touching an electric heating element while it is on can cause a serious burn.
- Check the wattage and do not overload your electrical circuit.
- Plug your heater directly into an outlet if possible. If you must use an extension cord, be sure its electrical rating is as high as the one listed on the heater.
- Be sure the grill protects the heating elements from children's fingers and toys.
- Keep children and pets away from the heater.