

# HOME HEATING

## PREVENTING FIRES DUE TO HOME HEATING

### • Facts

- Home heating is among the leading causes of fire fatalities in Washington State.
- Many fires are started by placing combustibles too close to a heat source.
- Electric baseboard and wall heaters are controlled by a thermostat and can turn on automatically when temperatures drop.

### • Fire Prevention

- To prevent fires, keep furnishings and other combustibles **36 inches from heat sources**.
- Store matches and other fire-starting appliances out of the reach of children.
- Follow manufacturer's instructions and maintenance recommendations for all home heating equipment.

### • Follow Proper Maintenance

Proper maintenance and an annual inspection of heat pumps, furnaces, space heaters, wood and coal stoves, fireplaces, and chimney and chimney connections by qualified specialists can help prevent fires and save lives. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for installation, venting, fueling, maintenance, and repair. Review the owner's manual to ensure you are familiar with the operating and safety features.

- **Space Heaters** – When using portable heaters, do not place them where it is possible for small children to get burned. Keep portable heaters out of hallways and room entrances. Avoid the use of extension cords with electric heaters. Always turn off portable space heaters before leaving the room or going to bed. Use only portable heaters with a tip switch that will turn the heater off immediately if knocked over.
- **Wood-Burning Appliances, Fireplaces, and Pellet Stoves** – Do not burn trash in the wood stove or fireplace. Burn only well-seasoned hardwoods. Be sure the fire you build fits your fireplace or stove; don't overload it. Be sure wood or pellet stoves are properly installed. Keep combustible materials 36 inches from the fireplace, stove, and chimney. Keep the area clean. Store stacked wood or pellets outdoors. Always use a fireplace screen to prevent sparks or burning wood from leaving the fireplace and starting a fire. Never leave a fire unattended.
- **Chimneys** – A dirty, blocked, or damaged chimney may cause improper venting of smoke up the flue and can also cause a chimney fire. Excessive creosote accumulation is the leading cause of chimney fires. An annual inspection by a certified chimney sweep can prevent fires and carbon monoxide poisoning.
- **Ashes** – Excessive ash accumulation prevents adequate air circulation needed for combustion. Keep wood stoves and fireplaces free of excess ash buildup. When removing ashes, use a metal container with a tight-fitting cover and cool in an outside location away from structures.

**References:** *National Fire Protection Association*  
[www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org); *Chimney Safety Institute of America*  
[www.csia.org](http://www.csia.org); *Hearth, Patio and Barbeque Association*  
[www.hpba.org/consumer/2/Safety/index.shtml](http://www.hpba.org/consumer/2/Safety/index.shtml).

**PREVENT FIRES**  
**IT'S YOUR JOB!**