



FIRE DEPARTMENT

MEDIA RELEASE

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Please Keep Heating Safety in mind during the cold season

- Each year during the cold season the Santa Rosa Fire Department responds to many calls for service related to unsafe heating practices. This year we have already had several instances where a fire started because someone left combustible materials too close to their heater. Heating equipment is a leading cause of home fires in December, January, and February. Please spread the word about these important reminders about Heating Safety.

The statistics are alarming!

- In 2005, heating equipment was involved in an estimated 62,200 reported U.S. home structure fires, with associated losses of 670 civilian deaths, 1,550 civilian injuries, and \$909 million in direct property damage.
- In 2005 heating equipment fires accounted for 16% of all reported home fires (second behind cooking) and 22% of home fire deaths. Space heaters, whether portable or stationary, accounted for one-third (32%) of the home heating fires and three-fourths (73%) of home heating fire deaths in 2005.
- Excluding small confined fires, heating equipment too close to things that can burn, such as upholstered furniture, clothing, mattress, or bedding, is by far the leading factor contributing to home heating fires (27%) and home heating fire deaths (53%).

Please take the time to read these other important safety tips to help keep you and your family safe during the cold season.

- Only use heating equipment that has the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- Have a qualified professional install stationary space heating equipment, water heaters or central heating equipment according to the local codes and manufacturer's instructions.
- Maintain heating equipment and chimneys by having them cleaned and inspected annually by a qualified professional.
- For fuel burning space heaters, always use the proper fuel as specified by the manufacturer
- Make sure the fireplace has a sturdy screen to prevent sparks from flying into the room and burn only dry, seasoned wood. Allow ashes to cool before disposing in a metal container, which is kept a safe distance from the home.

- For wood burning stoves, install chimney connectors and chimneys following manufacturer's instructions or have a professional do the installation.
- Make sure all fuel-burning equipment is vented to the outside to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Install and maintain carbon monoxide (CO) alarms to avoid the risk of CO poisoning.
- If you smell gas in your gas heater, do not attempt to light the appliance. Turn off all the controls and open doors and windows. Call a gas service person.
- Test smoke alarms at least monthly.

Your Santa Rosa Fire Department thanks you for turning your attention to Fire Prevention and Heating Safety!