

Maryland State Fire Marshal

News Release

Martin O'Malley
Governor

William E. Barnard
State Fire Marshal



STATE FIRE MARSHAL PROVIDES WINTER HEATING SAFETY TIPS

PIKESVILLE, MD (January 16, 2013) – As the temperatures drop, we depend on multiple types of heating sources to stay warm inside our homes. State Fire Marshal William E. Barnard provides Marylanders life and home saving heating safety tips. *“Elements of home heating continue to be a significant factor in dwelling fires in Maryland,”* according to the Fire Marshal. *“Following these guidelines, we can work together to reduce the number of residential fires.”*

- Ensure chimneys are cleaned annually or more frequently if used as the primary heating source.
- Never use a flammable liquid to start a fire. Only use combustible materials like newspaper, kindling or approved fire starting products to safely create a fire in a fire place or woodstove.
- Use properly sized fireplace screens or enclosures.
- When disposing of cooled ashes, do not use paper or plastic containers to remove them, instead use a metal container. Ashes will insulate hot embers long after the fire is considered out.
- Make sure fuel burning stoves and heaters are installed according to local fire codes and manufacturer’s instructions.
- Have your furnace inspected and serviced annually.
- Check portable electric heaters for frayed/damaged wires and ensure they are clean and placed on a flat level surface. Use only “listed” by an approved testing laboratory equipment and follow manufacturer’s instructions.
- Do not use extension cords with portable space heaters. The extension cord may overheat and cause a fire.
- If you use kerosene fuel fired heaters, use only “K-1” kerosene fuel. Never fill the unit inside, remove it to the exterior after it has cooled before refueling.
- Open a window enough to provide proper ventilation.

- Keep combustibles (furniture, curtains, clothing, paper goods, etc.), at least three feet from all heat sources.
- Provide a non-combustible protective barrier to keep children and pets from making contact with any heating appliance.
- Fuel burning appliances can produce the deadly, tasteless and odorless gas known as carbon monoxide. Install and maintain CO alarms inside your home to provide an early warning of dangerous carbon monoxide levels.
- Always turn off portable heating equipment when leaving the room for extended periods. Portable heaters should never be operated unattended.

Along with these heating tips, check to make sure your smoke alarms are in good working order. ***“Routine maintenance and safe operation of heating equipment combined with properly installed and operating smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors are a life-saving combination for all Marylanders,”*** stated Barnard.

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The Office of the State Fire Marshal is an agency of the Department of State Police dedicated to helping protect citizens from fire and explosion through a comprehensive program of education, inspection, investigation and fire protection engineering. For more information on fire safety call 1-800-525-3124, log onto our website at: www.mdsp.org/firemarshal and/or <http://facebook.com/MarylandStateFireMarshal>.