



Safely Heating Your Home

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The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) reports that two out of three home heating fires and associated deaths and injuries in 2005 involved portable and fixed space heaters. This includes fireplaces, chimneys and chimney connectors.

Portable Heaters & Space Heaters

Most home-heating fires involve portable heaters and space heaters. Here are a few tips to keep your home safe.

- **Shop for safety** – Buy heaters that have the label of an independent testing lab. Look for heaters with automatic shut-off safety features.
- **Maintain your heating equipment** – Have wood burning stoves inspected and cleaned regularly. Have all heating equipment inspected by local building officials.
- **Give space heaters space** – Keep all combustible materials away from portable heaters and place heaters at least three feet away from walls and furniture.

Central Heating & Furnaces

Statistically, central heating systems are less likely than portable or space heaters to cause home fires. Improper maintenance can drastically increase the fire risk to your home. Make sure to have your furnace inspected and serviced at least once a year by a qualified professional. Never store combustible items near a furnace. Make sure automatic shut-off systems conform to local fire safety codes and are in good working order. Make sure that attic furnaces are installed correctly by a licensed/qualified professional. Remember that improperly operating furnaces can produce carbon monoxide gas, which at high levels can kill a person in minutes.

Do You Know What to do if you have a chimney fire?

✓ **Get everyone out of the house, including you.**

✓ **Call 9-1-1**

✓ **Once the fire is out, call a certified Chimney Sweep to inspect for damage. Chimney fire damage and repair may be covered by homeowner insurance policies.**



Fireplaces

While a roaring fire in the fireplace can be cozy, it can also be dangerous if safety precautions are not taken. Here are some tips for fireplace safety:

- **Some fireplaces are designed to burn only natural gas logs.** Do not burn wood or other combustible materials in these fireplaces.
- **Have your chimney inspected and cleaned** by a professional at least once a year. Always open the chimney flue or damper to allow smoke to get out before lighting a fire.
- **Make sure your chimney has a spark arrestor** with ½ inch mesh. Never burn trash or paper in a fireplace, as it can float up a chimney and onto your roof or into your yard.
- **Use a glass or metal screen** in front of the fireplace opening to prevent embers or sparks from popping out onto combustible items.
- **Remove ashes in a metal container** and never store them inside your home. Ashes can retain heat for up to 48 hours. Be sure to soak ashes thoroughly to cool before disposing of them.
- **Carbon Monoxide gases can be emitted from a smoldering fire.** Be sure fires are fully extinguished before going to bed.
- **Consult** with the manufacturer, a licensed contractor, or your local building official before modifying your fireplace in any way.
- **Never heat your house using the kitchen stove or a portable barbecue or hibachi.**

Chimney Fires 2005

Buena Park	2
Coto de Caza	1
Dana Point	1
Irvine	3
Laguna Hills	1
Lake Forest	1
Mission Viejo	4
RSM	1
San Clemente	2
SJC	4

Furnace/Heater Fires 2005

Buena Park	1
Cypress	1
Laguna Hills	1
Laguna Woods	1
Lake Forest	1
Placentia	1
RSM	1
SJC	2
Seal Beach	1
Tustin	1
Yorba Linda	1

For More Information:

www.socalgas.com; www.nfpa.org;
www.usfa.fema.gov; www.epa.gov/iaq; www.cpsc.gov