For many residents, the high cost of home heating has increased the use of portable space heaters, fireplaces, and wood burning stoves. Unfortunately, using these devices can also increase the risk of home fires and carbon monoxide poisoning.

**Home Heating Fires**

Take steps now to protect your family and home from heating equipment fires.

- Keep anything that can burn at least three feet from all heat sources.
- Hire a professional to clean, inspect, and service your home’s heating equipment, fireplace, and chimney every year.
- Purchase space heaters that shut off automatically if they overheat or are knocked over.
- Always plug space heaters directly into wall outlets.
- Keep space heaters away from children and pets.
- Turn space heaters off before leaving the room or going to sleep.
- Keep a glass or metal screen in front of the fireplace to prevent sparks and embers from escaping.

**Carbon Monoxide Poisoning**

Burning any fuel produces carbon monoxide, a colorless and odorless gas that can be deadly. Fortunately, carbon monoxide poisoning can be prevented if you follow simple safety rules.

- Never use a gas range or oven for heating.
- Carefully follow manufacturer's installation and maintenance instructions if a wood stove is used to heat the home.
- Open the fireplace damper/flue before lighting a fire and keep it open until the ashes are cool.
- Know the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning – headache, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, weakness, sleepiness, and confusion. If you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning, get outside to fresh air immediately and call 911.
- Install carbon monoxide alarms outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home.