

JANUARY: Week 3 – Heating Hazards: Wood Stoves & Alternative Heating

Overview: Heating is one of the primary known causes of fires during the cold months (December, January, and February) in Tennessee. From 2010-2019, heating was responsible for 6.6% of all structure fires and 10.8% of all structure fire deaths. Alternative heating sources (wood stoves, oil stoves, space heaters, etc.) are common in Tennessee and are more hazardous than central heating sources (electric, gas). Reaching residents that use alternative heating can be challenging—use the resources and tips below to help reach as many as possible.



Tennessee suffered 19 deaths from portable heater fires from 2015-2019. An average of 63 portable heating fires and \$2.3 million in property loss are reported each year in Tennessee.

Resources: The following resources are available:

“Wood Stove Heating Safety Tips” YouTube video

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1FBtLNxcYZE>
- Wood stove safety “do’s & don’ts”
 - <http://www.iii.org/article/wood-stove-safety>
- Fireplace safety from Chimney Safety Institute of America
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ifQzltGn0Q>
- Facts about chimney fires (with wood stove info)
 - <http://www.csia.org/chimneyfires.html>
- Wood stove safety tips
 - <https://www.travelers.com/resources/home/fire-safety/wood-stove-safety-tips.aspx>
- Electric portable space heater safety:
 - <http://www.nfpa.org/~//media/files/public-education/resources/safety-tip-sheets/portableheatersafety.pdf?la=en>
- “Space Heater Virtual Demonstration” YouTube video
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RIFxWd7DSsg>
- Heating safety tip sheet
 - http://www.nfpa.org/~//media/files/public-education/resources/safety-tip-sheets/heating_safety.pdf
- “Heating Safety Messages in American Sign Language” YouTube video
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OCtnLC6-JPg>
- Home Fires Involving Heating Equipment NFPA report
 - <http://www.nfpa.org/news-and-research/fire-statistics-and-reports/fire-statistics/fire-causes/appliances-and-equipment/heating-equipment>

Media Tools: Use the following pre-written media releases and social media posts in your efforts to promote alternative heating safety:

- **Customizable Press Release**

- <http://www.nfpa.org/~media/files/public-education/resources/community-tool-kits/heating-kit/heatingkitalternativeheatingnewsrelease.doc?as=1&iar=1&la=en>

- **Twitter**

- Never extend a stove pipe through a wall or ceiling—this can cause a major fire hazard! @TNCommerceInsur #FireSafeTN
- A clean stove is a happy stove! Remove ashes regularly and inspect your stove for wear and tear. @TNCommerceInsur #FireSafeTn
- Never burn anything other than wood in your wood stove. Other combustibles could damage your stove or give off toxic fumes. @TNCommerceInsur
- Don't "over fire" your stove! This can result in damage to your stove and home. Make only a fire that your stove can handle @TNCommerceInsur
- Nearly 20% of home heating fires were caused by portable heaters. Check out these safety tips: <http://bit.ly/2v2aTX3> @TNCommerceInsur
- Always have a 3-foot safe zone around all space heaters. Check here for more safety tips: <http://bit.ly/2v2aTX3> @TNCommerceInsur
- Stay safe while you stay warm! Follow these heating safety tips: <http://bit.ly/2v2aTX3> @TNCommerceInsur

- **Facebook**

- Never "over fire" your stove! In other words, never make a fire larger than the stove can handle. Over firing will result in flames entering the flue pipe or chimney, and can cause damage to the stove, the chimney connector or the chimney itself, which could result in a house fire. To avoid over firing, check the instruction manual or with the manufacturer. For more safety tips, go here: <https://www.travelers.com/resources/home/fire-safety/wood-stove-safety-tips.aspx>
- Some helpful wood stove safety tips: Always make sure there is enough clearance between the stove and combustible materials, including floors, walls and ceilings. Always place the stove on a noncombustible, fire resistant base. Only burn dry, well-seasoned wood. For more tips, go here: <http://www.iii.org/article/wood-stove-safety>
- Space heaters, whether portable or stationary, accounted for 2 of every 5 (40%) of home heating fires and 4 out of 5 (84%) of home heating fire deaths. Learn more here: <http://www.nfpa.org/~media/files/public-education/resources/safety-tip-sheets/portableheatersafety.pdf?la=en>
- Placing things that can burn too close to heating equipment or placing heating equipment too close to things that can burn, such as upholstered furniture, clothing, mattress, or bedding, was the leading factor contributing to ignition in fatal home heating fires and accounted for more than half (56%) of home heating fire deaths. Learn more here: <http://www.nfpa.org/~media/files/public-education/resources/safety-tip-sheets/portableheatersafety.pdf?la=en>
- If you use portable space heaters, make sure to follow these safety tips. They may save your life! <http://www.nfpa.org/~media/files/public-education/resources/safety-tip-sheets/portableheatersafety.pdf?la=en>

Educator Tip: NFPA has a great resource for spreading messages about heating safety using its “Hot Ideas: How To Get Heating Safety Messages Out To Your Community” toolkit. Included in the toolkit are suggestions on:

- How to hold an open house
- How to involve your audience
- How to reach the media/press
- How to go door-to-door

Access the full toolkit by going here: <http://www.nfpa.org/~media/files/public-education/resources/community-tool-kits/heating-kit/heatingkithotideas.pdf?la=en>

NFPA Messaging:

Heating

General Heating

10.1.3 All heaters need space. Keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet away from heating equipment.

Portable Electric Space Heaters

10.2.1 Turn heaters off when you go to bed or leave the room.

10.2.3 Purchase and use space heaters that have an automatic shut off—if they tip over, they shut off.

10.2.4 Place space heaters on a solid, flat surface and keep them and their electrical cords away from things that can burn, high traffic areas, and doorways.

10.2.5 Plug space heaters directly into wall outlets and never into an extension cord or power strip.

Wood-Burning and Pellet Stoves

10.4.1 Have a qualified professional install stoves, chimney connectors, and chimneys following the manufacturer’s instructions.

10.4.3 In wood stoves, burn only dry, seasoned wood.

Fireplaces

10.5.5 Chimneys and vents need to be cleaned and inspected by a qualified professional at least once a year.