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# CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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## **CAL FIRE urges all Californians to Stay Safe and Warm this Winter**

Sacramento - Winter is here! The days are shorter, the outside temperature is lower, and in some places, it's cold, icy and snowy. No matter where you live, winter brings a change in season and a time to think about home-heating safety. Did you know that heating equipment is one of the leading causes of home fires and home fire deaths? With a few simple safety tips and precautions, you can prevent most heating fires from happening.

CAL FIRE would like to offer the following fire safety tips to encourage safety and warmth:

- ✓ Keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet away from heating equipment, like the furnace, fireplace, woodstove or portable space heater.
- ✓ Have a 3-foot "kid-free zone" around open fires and space heaters.
- ✓ Never use your oven to heat your home.
- ✓ Have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year by a qualified professional.
- ✓ Always turn portable heaters off when leaving a room or going to bed.
- ✓ Make sure the fireplace has a sturdy screen to stop sparks from flying into the room.
- ✓ Allow fireplace ashes to cool before disposing of them. Place in a tightly covered metal container at least 10 feet away from your home and any other nearby buildings.
- ✓ **Never** empty fireplace or woodstove ashes directly into a trash can.
- ✓ Install and maintain carbon monoxide (CO) alarms to avoid the risk of CO poisoning.
- ✓ Install and maintain smoke alarms and test them once a month.

Roughly half of all home heating fires are reported during the months of December, January and February. For more information on safe home heating visit the CAL FIRE website at [www.fire.ca.gov](http://www.fire.ca.gov).

When home fire sprinklers are used with working smoke alarms, your chances of surviving a fire are greatly increased. Sprinklers are affordable, they can increase property value and lower insurance rates.

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