



Department
of Commerce

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release
November 17, 2014

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STATE FIRE MARSHAL REMINDS OHIOANS TO BE FIRE SAFE DURING WINTER MONTHS

The first significant snow of the season has hit Ohio, and State Fire Marshal Larry Flowers wants to remind Ohioans that there is increased risk for home fires when the weather turns bad. However, many of these fires are preventable and citizens can reduce their risks of becoming a fire casualty by identifying potential hazards and following simple safety tips.

“There have been power outages reported around the state, and that’s when many people turn to alternative heating sources to stay warm,” said Marshal Flowers. “That also means there’s an increased chance for a fire. Make sure that if you’re using candles or makeshift heating sources or cooking methods that you do so safely. By following some basic safety tips, you can protect yourself and your family when severe weather strikes.”

Marshal Flowers and the U.S. Fire Administration offer these tips:

Heating Safety

- Use kerosene heaters and space heaters according to the manufacturer’s instructions.
- Alternative heaters need their space. Keep anything combustible at least three feet away.
- Make sure your alternative heaters have 'tip switches.' These 'tip switches' are designed to automatically turn off the heater in the event they tip over.
- Do not use the kitchen oven range to heat your home. In addition to being a fire hazard, it can be a source of toxic fumes.
- Never refill a space heater while it is operating or still hot.
- Refuel heaters only outdoors.
- Make sure wood stoves are properly installed, and at least three feet away from combustible materials. Ensure they have the proper floor support and adequate ventilation.

Generator Safety

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions and guidelines when using generators.
- Use a generator or other fuel-powered machines outside the home. CO fumes are odorless and can quickly overwhelm you indoors.
- Use the appropriate sized and type power cords to carry the electric load. Overloaded cords can overheat and cause fires.

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- Never run cords under rugs or carpets where heat might build up or damage to a cord may go unnoticed.
- Never connect generators to another power source such as power lines. The reverse flow of electricity or 'backfeed' can electrocute an unsuspecting utility worker.

Electrical Safety

- If your home has sustained flood or water damage, and you can safely get to the main breaker or fuse box, turn off the power.
- Assume all wires on the ground are electrically charged. This includes cable TV feeds.
- Look for and replace frayed or cracked extension and appliance cords, loose prongs, and plugs.
- Exposed outlets and wiring could present a fire and life safety hazard.
- Appliances that emit smoke or sparks should be repaired or replaced.
- Have a licensed electrician check your home for damage.

Additional Tips

- Be careful when using candles. Keep the flame away from combustible objects and out of the reach of children.
- If the power goes out, make certain that all electrical appliances, such as stoves, electric space heaters and hair dryers, are in the OFF position.
- Make certain that your home's smoke alarms are in proper working order.
- Some smoke alarms may be dependent on your home's electrical service and could be inoperative during a power outage. Check to see if your smoke alarm uses a back-up battery and install a new battery at least once a year.
- Smoke alarms should be installed on every level of your home and inside and outside of sleeping areas.
- All smoke alarms should be tested monthly. All batteries should be replaced with new ones at least once a year.
- If there is a fire hydrant near your home, keep it clear of snow, ice and debris for easy access by the fire department.

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