

Make Fire Safety a Holiday Priority, says Oregon State Fire Marshal

by Bend Weekly News Sources

Oregon State Fire Marshal Nancy Orr cites cooking and heating related fires as the two leading fire causes during the holidays. In the past five years, during the annual holiday period from November 20 to January 15, cooking related fires resulted in two deaths and an estimated \$3,094,805 in property loss. Failure to clean chimneys, woodstoves and other heating systems during the same time period caused 418 fires at a cost of \$873,393.

“For citizens with fire losses, the magic of the holidays literally disappears in flames,” says Orr. “Cleaning a chimney or keeping an eye on what you are cooking can prevent tragedy from striking.” Cooking safety tips:

- Keep a close eye on what you're cooking - never leave cooking food unattended.
- Keep your cooking area clean, including stovetop, oven and exhaust fan.
- Keep dishtowels and potholders away from stove burners.
- Cooking oil can ignite quickly. Heat oil slowly and watch it closely.
- Watch your sleeves - loose sleeves over burners can ignite or catch on handles of pots and pans.
- Keep a fire extinguisher in your kitchen, in an easy to reach location and know how to use it.

Holiday safety heating tips:

- Have chimney and woodstove flues inspected and cleaned each year by a qualified chimney sweep. Ask them to check for creosote deposits, soot build-up or physical damage.
- Keep wrapping paper and greenery out of fireplaces and woodstoves. Dispose of properly.
- Keep a clutter free environment. Store kindling, firelogs and wood at least three feet from any heat source. Always use a fireplace screen.

For more info on Oregon's holiday residential fire cause statistics see:
http://www.oregon.gov/OOHS/SFM/Home_Fire_Safety_Campaign.shtml

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