

Fire Safety In Home Heating Is A Priority As Weather Cools

by Bend Weekly News Sources

Days are shorter, evenings are cooler and Oregon households are beginning to turn up the heat. Oregon State Fire Marshal Nancy Orr reminds Oregonians chimney fires and combustibles left too close to a heat source are the state's two leading fire causes in heating related fires. These types of fires are easily prevented by keeping chimneys cleaned and remembering to keep combustibles such as furniture, blankets and clothing far away from heaters, woodstoves and similar heat sources. During the last five years, fires involving heating sources, including woodstoves, portable, baseboard and wall heaters were responsible for 2,891 fires causing 11 fatalities and 59 injuries to Oregonians. Property losses from these fires are estimated at \$27,377,507. Almost half of these fires began in chimneys. "Although fires during the day when no one is home are devastating, fires at night when family members are sleeping may be fatal," alerts Orr. "Simple precautions prevent fires and the tragedies they bring." To reduce fire risk, Orr recommends:

- Have chimneys and flues inspected and cleaned each year by a qualified chimney sweep. Ask them to check for creosote deposits, soot build-up or physical damage.
- Move combustibles including paper, trash, furniture, bedding or clothing at least three feet away from heat sources. Heat sources include candles, gas/wood/pellet stoves, portable, baseboard and wall heaters and any sources with an open flame.
- Be cautious with portable heaters. Make sure these heaters have a tip switch to turn them off if knocked over. Keep them away from high traffic areas and unplug when not in use and at night.

For more prevention information see: http://www.oregon.gov/OOHS/SFM/Home_Fire_Safety_Campaign.shtml

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