



HOUSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

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Cold Weather is Approaching HFD Reminds Citizens to Be Cautious When Using Heaters to Stay Warm

With a winter storm watch being issued for areas north of Houston tonight through tomorrow and Houston seeing lower temperatures as well, the Houston Fire Department would like to remind citizens of some simple safety tips if using heaters to stay warm. HFD has already responded to at least eight incidents since January 1, 2009, involving space heaters or heating units that may have been prevented by following these safety tips.

Electric Space Heaters

- Space heaters need their space! Keep them at least 3 feet away from combustibles-walls, sofas and anything else that will burn.
- Space heaters should always be placed on the floor.
- Never leave children alone in a room with a space heater and do not let children adjust the controls or move the heater
- Open-faced heaters should have a proper screen and grates in place-never operate a defective heater.
- Never overload outlets or breakers.
- Don't hide cords under rugs or carpets. Placing anything on top of the cord could cause it to overheat and can cause a fire
- Don't use an extension cord with the heater. If the cord is hot to the touch, turn off the heater and unplug it!
- Electric heaters permanently installed in the wall or ceiling should have lint and dust removed regularly. Lint and dust will burn!

Gas Heaters

- Space heaters need their space! Keep them at least 3 feet away from combustibles-walls, sofas and anything else that will burn.
- Provide adequate ventilation when using a gas space heater, opening a window slightly (one inch) to prevent carbon monoxide buildup.
- Never leave children alone in a room with a space heater and do not let children adjust the controls or move the heater
- Open-faced heaters should have a proper screen and grates in place-never operate a defective heater.
- If you use a gas space heater, light the match before you turn on the gas. This avoids the risk of flashback caused by accumulating gas.

Additional Safety Tips

- Have your heating system professionally inspected and serviced every year.
- Purchase a Carbon Monoxide detector if you use gas or a fireplace for your heating.
- Install a Carbon Monoxide detector in the hallway near every separate sleeping area of the home.
- Most importantly, always have a working smoke detector and make sure you and your family know two ways out if there is a fire.
- HFD also highly recommends that appliances, such as stoves and ovens, never be used for heating up the residence. These appliances should be only be used for the purpose intended.

For additional safety tips, citizens may visit the HFD website at www.houstonfire.org

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**Help Us Help You.
Working Smoke Detectors Save Lives!**

