

SMART THINKING

Fall/Winter

Fire Prevention Tips!

A house fire can be devastating, but with a little care and prevention, you can protect your family, home, and possessions.

Cooking causes about half of home fires in the U.S.

- Never leave cooking pans unattended, especially when cooking with oil.
- Never throw water on a grease/oil fire.
- Do not cook when overtired or inebriated.
- Have a plan and use extra caution while preparing holiday meals.

Heating is the next leading cause of fire, especially in winter.

- Have your furnace, woodstove, or pellet stove properly serviced each year and all chimneys/flues cleaned by a qualified contractor.
- Install only UL approved woodstoves or fireplaces with clearances recommended by the manufacturer.
- Woodstoves need to be on their own separate flue.
- Burn only seasoned wood to reduce creosote buildup.
- Dispose of ashes in a non-combustible, metal container.



Electrical causes of fire are common too.

- Do not overload extension cords or join them together for length.
- Throw away any aging cords or electrical devices with broken or worn cords.
- Clean out dryer lint trap after every load, and clean out and inspect dryer exhaust vent twice a year.
- If fuses are present, replace with a circuit breaker panel as soon as possible and make sure that your wiring meets current electrical codes.

Smoking and candles also lead to house fires.

- Never smoke in bed or when sleepy.
- Never smoke in a garage or near flammable materials.
- Never burn candles in a closed area, near flammable materials, or leave unattended.
- Always place candles on fire resistant surfaces and trim wicks.

Remember to...



Install smoke detectors on each floor of your home and in every bedroom.



Change batteries in smoke detectors twice a year and test them every month.

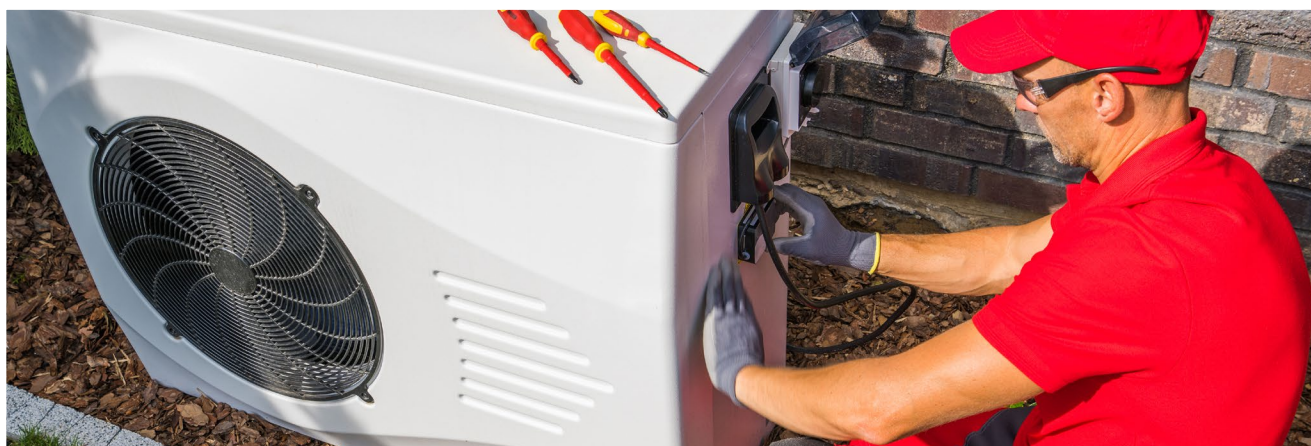


Review fire escape plans with family members often.



Keep an ABC class fire extinguisher in the kitchen and any room with a heating device.

Quick Ways to Cut Home Heating Costs



As energy prices rise and temperatures drop, it's a good time to consider ways to keep your home warm without draining your bank account.

- Reversing your ceiling fan blades and running ceiling fans on low will aid in circulating warm air in the room. However, if you have heated floors, turn ceiling fans off.
- Position furniture so airflow isn't blocked from forced air vents and cold air returns. Ensure vents are open.
- Open curtains and blinds on sunny days to help naturally warm your home. Close them before sunset to retain heat inside.
- Close interior doors to unused rooms to help consolidate heat within the living areas of your home, but to avoid frozen pipes, don't turn off the heat completely to those rooms.
- Lower your thermostat 7-10 degrees when away from home for 8 hours or more, but don't go below 60 degrees as you might risk frozen pipes in the event of a power outage.
- Add weather stripping and door sweeps to exterior doors to minimize drafts and seal gaps in window frames.
- In the basement, insulate the rim joist between the top of the foundation wall and the floor joist to prevent cold air from getting in. (This will also help protect pipes from freezing.)
- In the attic, check insulation depth and add more as needed to reach the recommended R-value for your region.
- Have heat pumps and furnaces serviced annually to ensure optimal efficiency.

Protect Your Property with a Freeze Alarm

A freeze alarm provides an easy and inexpensive way to protect your home, business, or cottage from frozen pipes and water damage when you're not there. These devices monitor the temperature inside a building and send an alert if it drops below a pre-set limit. Once you know there is a problem, you can take action to fix the issue before pipes burst, protecting your property from damage and saving yourself from stress and a mess.

DECORATION CONSIDERATIONS:

Check out this video for tips on staying safe while being festive.

