

Home Heating Safety

We all need heat to keep our homes warm and comfortable in the winter. However, the equipment we use to heat our homes can be dangerous if it is not designed, installed, used and maintained properly. Follow these safety tips to prevent fire and other hazards when heating your home.

All heating equipment

- Buy appliances certified by a recognized testing agency, such as the Canadian Standards Association (CSA), Intertek Testing Services (ITS), or Underwriters' Laboratories of Canada (ULC). Certified appliances will be marked with the symbol of the testing agency.
- Always follow manufacturer's instructions when installing and operating equipment.
- Supervise children when they are in the room with heating equipment. If possible, keep children away from heating equipment.

Furnaces and water heaters

- The pilot flame can ignite flammable liquid vapours, so keep flammable liquids and chemicals (gasoline, solvents etc.) away from furnaces and water heaters.
- Have your furnace inspected once a year by a qualified heating contractor.

Space heaters

- Keep the area around space heaters clear. There should be at least one metre (three feet) of clear space in all directions around a space heater.
- Make sure that blankets, clothes, or other combustible materials are not in a position to fall on or near a space heater.
- Areas surrounding space heaters should not become too hot to touch.
- Don't put clothes on or near a space heater to dry.
- Use only the fuel for which the heater was designed.
- Inspect cords on electrical heaters. If cords are frayed or split, or overheat during operation, the unit is a fire hazard.

Wood and coal stoves and heaters

- Use only the fuel for which the stove or heater was designed. Don't use flammable/combustible liquids to start a fire.
- Make sure the stove or heater is installed at least one metre (three feet) away from the wall.
- Place an approved stove board under the stove or heater to protect the floor from heat and hot coals.

Fireplaces

- Have your chimney checked and cleaned each year by a qualified person.
- Always supervise a fire. Make sure a fire is completely out before leaving the house or going to bed.
- Use small amounts of dry, well-seasoned wood. Don't burn scrap paper, Christmas trees or other waste in the fireplace.

Carbon monoxide

All fuel-burning appliances need a supply of fresh air to burn properly. Without proper ventilation, fuel burning heating equipment could produce carbon monoxide, a poisonous gas. Check that all appliances have vents to the outside. For more information about carbon monoxide, see Alberta Municipal Affairs' Safety Tips for Carbon Monoxide.

For more information, please call 1-866-421-6929 or visit www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca/ss