

# WINTERIZE YOUR SAFETY PLANS

## Don't Let Rising Heating Prices Lead to Winter Fires



American Red Cross



While the numbers of apartment and house fires typically rise this time of year due to candles and space heaters, there could be a dramatically increased risk this coming winter. Rising oil and gas prices are leading many families to look for alternative sources to heat their homes. *That's why your American Red Cross is urging fire safety practices.* This year, more than ever, take time to make your home as safe as you can, plotting & practicing escape routes and following through on your plan if needed, to prevent tragedy from occurring.

### Heat Your Home Safely

- **Be Cautious With Portable Space Heaters-** During the months of December, January and February, heating equipment is the leading cause of home fires, according to the National Fire Prevention Association. About two-thirds of home heating fire deaths are caused by portable or fixed space heaters. To prevent fire, place space heaters at least three feet away from anything combustible, including wallpaper, bedding, clothing, pets, and people. Never leave space heaters operating when you are not in the room or when you go to bed. Don't leave children or pets

unattended near space heaters, and be sure everyone knows that drying wet mittens or other clothing over space heaters is a fire hazard.

- **Use Caution With Candles** - Keep candles away from combustible materials. Don't leave children unattended in a room with lit candles. Keep candles, matches and lighters out of the reach of children. Never display lighted candles in windows or near exits. Do not use candles for lighting if the power goes out. Use flashlights only.
- **Keep Fire Extinguishers Handy Throughout Your Home**- Get training from the fire department on how to use them. Consider installing other equipment, such as an automatic fire sprinkler system in your home.
- **Inspect Fireplaces and Wood Stoves** - Use a sturdy screen when burning fires. Burn only wood - never burn paper or pine boughs. Have your chimney connections and flues inspected by a professional and cleaned if necessary prior to the start of every heating season.
- **Use Generators Carefully**- If you have a portable generator and the power goes out, always plan to keep the generator outdoors-never operate it inside, including the basement or garage. Do not hook up a generator directly to your home's wiring. The safest thing to do is to connect the equipment you want to power directly to the outlets on the generator. Connecting a cord from the generator to a point on the permanent wiring system and backfeeding power to your home is an unsafe method to supply a building with power.
- **Use Clothing and Blankets to Build Layers Against the Cold** - Have extra blankets, scarves, hats, socks and sweaters on hand.
- **Create a Disaster Supplies Kit** — Get together lifesaving items in both your home and vehicle. Go to [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) for a list of materials.
- **Make Sure Smoke Alarms are Working Properly** and replace batteries as necessary.
- **Don't Overload Your Electrical Outlets**. Be careful of extension cords that present hazardous walkways.
- **Make Sure to Learn the Life Saving Skills of First Aid/CPR**. Contact the chapter for details.



**American  
Red Cross**

*Together, we can save a life*