

■ Good Hands® Advice

Tips to help you be prepared and informed



Prepare Your Home for Winter

As winter approaches, cold weather and freezing temperatures mean it will soon be time to turn up the heat. There are a few safety precautions every homeowner should take before turning on the furnace or getting cozy in front of the fireplace. Here are some tips to help you winter proof and protect your home, while ensuring you and your family stay safe and warm this winter:

Fireplaces and Wood Stoves

- Have your chimney inspected and cleaned every year, and have cracks or loose bricks repaired immediately.
- Install a mesh screen to cover the opening on your chimney to keep birds and small animals out and hot sparks in.
- Keep a glass or metal screen in front of the fireplace to help prevent sparks from jumping out and unwanted material from going in.
- Don't use flammable liquids to start or accelerate any fire.
- Keep all flammable materials away from your fireplace mantle.
- Avoid using large amounts of paper to build roaring fires as it could ignite creosote in the chimney.
- Never burn charcoal indoors as it can give off lethal amounts of carbon monoxide.
- Once the fire is burning, don't leave it unattended. Extinguish it completely before you go to bed or leave the house.
- Do not close the damper with hot ashes in the fireplace. A closed damper can cause the fire to heat up again and force toxic carbon monoxide into the house.
- When using synthetic logs, follow the directions on the package. Do not break a synthetic log apart to quicken the fire.

Furnaces

- Have your furnace inspected to ensure it is safe and in good working condition before you use it for the first time each season.
- Be sure all furnace controls and emergency shutoffs are in proper working condition.
- Check for holes and cracks in the flue pipe and pipe seams. Soot along or around seams may be an indicator of a leak.

- Keep the area around your furnace clear of any flammable items and make sure there is a clear path to the unit.
- Leave furnace repairs to qualified specialists. Do not attempt repairs yourself unless you are qualified.

Space Heaters

- Make sure the heater is clear of dust and dirt.
- Do not leave a space heater unattended.
- Place it on a level, hard, non-flammable surface.
- Keep the heater at least three feet from bedding, drapes, furniture or other flammable items.
- Check the cord for cracks or frays; do not use it if you find any.

Safety

- Install monitored fire alarms and carbon monoxide detectors. Test them regularly and change batteries at least once a year.

For more helpful tips and advice, visit allstate.ca/learningcentre, contact your local Allstate Insurance Agency or call 1-800-allstate.

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