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News Release

For Immediate Release

Cool Weather Brings Increased Fire Risk

As the temperatures begin to dip down, the Springfield Fire Department is warning residents to follow some basic tips to prevent a home fire this winter. Each year, nearly 500 people die in fires that involve heating equipment. In Springfield, one person died as a result of burns from a propane heater earlier this year. Fortunately, some simple steps can prevent more heating-related fires from happening.

- Keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet away from heating equipment, such as the furnace, fireplace, space heater or wood stove.
- Have a qualified professional inspect and clean your chimney and fireplace before using it for the first time this season.
- Turn space heaters off when leaving the room or going to bed and never power a space heater with an extension cord. Space heaters were to blame for several home fires in Springfield last winter.
- For alternative heaters, always use the proper fuel as specified by the manufacturer.
- Make sure your fireplace has a protective screen to prevent sparks from flying into the room. Burn only dry, seasoned wood and allow the ashes to completely cool before disposing of them in a metal container.
- Make sure all fuel-burning equipment is vented to the outside to avoid carbon monoxide.
- Install smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of your home. Test your smoke alarms monthly.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, the leading factors contributing to ignition in home heating equipment fires were failure to clean (27%), heat source too close to combustibles (14%), and unclassified mechanical failure or malfunction (12%). Heat source too close to combustibles was a factor in half (51%) of associated fire deaths.

For more tips, visit the our website at www.springfieldmo.gov/fire.

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