



## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

RSA Tower 201 Monroe Street, Suite 914 Montgomery, AL 36104  
Phone 334-206-5300 Fax 334-206-5520

[www.adph.org](http://www.adph.org)

---

## **Be aware of home heating hazards**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

#### **CONTACT:**

Samille Jackson  
(334) 206-5658

Each year thousands of Americans lose their lives in fires caused by home heating sources. These fires originate from all methods of home heating including central heating units, fireplaces and chimneys, and portable heaters. As we move farther along into the winter season, let us all be mindful of the risks.

The National Fire Protection Association recently released its report on home heating equipment fires occurring between 2002 and 2005. According to the report, U.S. fire departments responded to 62,200 home structure fires that involved heating equipment in 2005. The results were 670 civilian fire deaths, 1,550 civilian fire injuries, and \$909 million in property damage.

#### **Statistics**

- \* Chimneys and chimney connectors accounted for the largest share (36 percent) of home heating fire incidents.
- \* Failure to clean accounted for two-thirds (64 percent) of the confined chimney and chimney connector fires.
- \* Space heaters, whether portable or stationary, accounted for one-third (32 percent) of the home heating fires and three-fourths (73 percent) of home heating fire deaths.

Remember that most often the deadliest fires are a result of improper use of fireplaces and chimneys and portable heaters. Examples of improper usage include placing heating equipment near things that can burn, such as upholstered furniture, clothing, mattresses or bedding.

#### **The Alabama Department of Public Health urges you to follow these safety recommendations when trying to make a warm environment for your families:**

- \* Make sure space heaters carry the mark of an independent testing laboratory and are legal for use in your community.

- \* Install your space heater according to manufacturer's instructions or applicable codes, consider professional installation.
- \* Plug your electric-powered space heater into an outlet with sufficient capacity and never into an extension cord.
- \* Use the proper fuel as well as the proper grade for your liquid-fueled space heater. Refuel only in a well-ventilated area and when the equipment is cool.
- \* In your fireplace or wood stove, use only dry, seasoned wood to avoid the build-up of creosote.
- \* Use only paper or kindling wood, not a flammable liquid, to start the fire. Do not use artificial logs in wood stoves.
- \* Make sure your fireplace has a sturdy screen to prevent sparks from flying into the room. Allow fireplace and woodstove ashes to cool before disposing in a metal container, which is kept a safe distance from your home.
- \* Turn off space heaters whenever the room they are in is unoccupied or under circumstances when manufacturer's instructions say they should be turned off. Portable space heaters are so easy to knock over in the dark that they should be turned off when going to bed. Make sure your primary heating equipment for the bedrooms is sufficient to avoid risks to residents from severe cold.
- \* Do not use your oven to heat your home.

Be aware of home heating hazards

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Samille Jackson  
(334) 206-5658

Each year thousands of Americans lose their lives in fires caused by home heating sources. These fires originate from all methods of home heating including central heating units, fireplaces and chimneys, and portable heaters. As we move farther along into the winter season, let us all be mindful of the risks.

The National Fire Protection Association recently released its report on home heating equipment fires occurring between 2002 and 2005. According to the report, U.S. fire departments responded to 62,200 home structure fires that involved heating equipment in 2005. The results were 670 civilian fire deaths, 1,550 civilian fire injuries, and \$909 million in property damage.

### **Statistics**

- Chimneys and chimney connectors accounted for the largest share (36 percent) of home heating fire incidents.

- Failure to clean accounted for two-thirds (64 percent) of the confined chimney and chimney connector fires.
- Space heaters, whether portable or stationary, accounted for one-third (32 percent) of the home heating fires and three-fourths (73 percent) of home heating fire deaths.

Remember that most often the deadliest fires are a result of improper use of fireplaces and chimneys and portable heaters. Examples of improper usage include placing heating equipment near things that can burn, such as upholstered furniture, clothing, mattresses or bedding.

**The Alabama Department of Public Health urges you to follow these safety recommendations when trying to make a warm environment for your families:**

- Make sure space heaters carry the mark of an independent testing laboratory and are legal for use in your community.
- Install your space heater according to manufacturer's instructions or applicable codes, consider professional installation.
- Plug your electric-powered space heater into an outlet with sufficient capacity and never into an extension cord.
- Use the proper fuel as well as the proper grade for your liquid-fueled space heater. Refuel only in a well-ventilated area and when the equipment is cool.
- In your fireplace or wood stove, use only dry, seasoned wood to avoid the build-up of creosote.
- Use only paper or kindling wood, not a flammable liquid, to start the fire. Do not use artificial logs in wood stoves.
- Make sure your fireplace has a sturdy screen to prevent sparks from flying into the room. Allow fireplace and woodstove ashes to cool before disposing in a metal container, which is kept a safe distance from your home.
- Turn off space heaters whenever the room they are in is unoccupied or under circumstances when manufacturer's instructions say they should be turned off. Portable space heaters are so easy to knock over in the dark that they should be turned off when going to bed. Make sure your primary heating equipment for the bedrooms is sufficient to avoid risks to residents from severe cold.
- Do not use your oven to heat your home.