

City of Alpena

News Release of November 27, 2018



HOME HEATING MAJOR CAUSE OF WINTER HOUSE FIRES

The Alpena City Fire Department, in cooperation with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) reminds residents that home heating fires account for the vast majority of winter house fires. Between 2011-2015 U.S. fire departments responded to 54,030 home structure fires that involved heating equipment, killing 480 civilians and causing \$1.1 billion in damage. These fires accounted for 15% of all reported home fires, second behind cooking. 85% of these fires were caused by objects too close to space heaters, although chimney fires were the next highest cause, primarily due to lack of annual cleaning.

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Here are some tips to avoid heating fires this winter:

- Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from heating equipment, like the furnace, fireplace, wood stove, or portable space heater.
- Have a three-foot “kid-free zone” around open fires and space heaters.
- Never use your oven to heat your home.
- Have a qualified professional install stationary space heating equipment, water heaters or central heating equipment according to the local codes and manufacturer’s instructions.
- Have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year by a qualified professional.

- Remember to turn portable heaters off when leaving the room or going to bed.
- Always use the right kind of fuel, specified by the manufacturer, for fuel burning space heaters.
- Make sure the fireplace has a sturdy screen to stop sparks from flying into the room. Ashes should be cool before putting them in a metal container. Keep the container a safe distance away from your home.
- Be sure to refuel kerosene heaters outdoors away from the house. Never fuel any appliance when it's on, or still hot.
- Alpena Fire Department recommends 10-year lithium-type smoke alarms and can provide free home safety visits and in some cases, alarms and installation as needed.
- Carbon Monoxide alarms are a must in every home; especially those with auxiliary heating devices in use.

The Alpena Fire Department provides fire and emergency services for the City of Alpena and Advanced Life Support (Paramedic) ambulance response for all of Alpena County. All fires and serious injuries should be reported to Alpena County Central Dispatch by dialing 9-1-1, who will send the appropriate help immediately.