



TOWNSHIP OF MAHWAH FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU

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WOOD STOVES, PORTABLE HEATERS AND FIREPLACES

The Facts:

Each year, fires claim the lives of thousands of Americans, injures tens of thousands, and causes billions of dollars in damages.

People living in rural areas are twice as likely to die in a fire than those living in mid-size cities or suburban areas. The misuse of woodstoves, portable space heaters and kerosene heaters are especially common risks in rural areas.

The United States Fire Administration (USFA) believes that rural fire problems can be reduced by teaching people to recognize the hazard. By following some of the outlined precautionary steps, individuals can greatly reduce their chances of becoming a fire casualty.



WOOD STOVES

Carefully follow the manufacturer's installation and maintenance instructions.

Look for solid construction, such as plate steel or cast-iron metal.

Check for cracks and inspect legs, hinges, and door seals for smooth joints and seams.

Use only seasoned wood for fuel, not green wood, artificial logs, or trash.

Inspect and clean your pipes and chimneys annually, but check monthly for damage and obstructions.

Be sure to keep all combustibles at least three feet away from your woodstove.





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ELECTRIC SPACE HEATERS

Buy only heaters with Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) safety listing.

Check to make sure that the unit has a thermostat control mechanism and will switch off automatically if the heater falls over.

Never dry or store objects on top of your heater.

Keep combustibles at least three feet away from each heater.

Always unplug your electric space heater when not in use.



KEROSENE HEATERS

Buy only Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) approved heaters and check with fire department on the legality of kerosene heater use in your community. Never fill your kerosene heater with gasoline or camp stove fuel.

Only use crystal clear K-1 kerosene and do not overfill the heater.

Use the kerosene heater in a well-ventilated room.



FIREPLACES

Fireplaces build up creosote in their chimneys. They need to be cleaned out frequently.

Chimneys should be inspected for obstructions and cracks to prevent deadly chimney and roof fires.



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Check that the damper is open prior to starting any fire in your fireplace.

Never burn trash, paper or green wood in your fireplace.

Use a screen heavy enough to stop rolling logs and big enough to cover the entire opening of the fireplace to catch flying sparks.

Do not wear loose clothes near any open flame.

Make sure the fire is completely out before leaving the house or going to bed.

Store cooled ashes in a tightly sealed metal container outside the home.

Having a working smoke detector dramatically increases your chances of survival in the event of a fire.

