



# FIRE DEPARTMENT

CITY OF NEW YORK

Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor  
Nicholas Scoppetta, Fire Commissioner

## FIRE SAFETY EDUCATION

# WINTER FIRE SAFETY

The winter season is the fire season, with more than 33% of home fires occurring during the months of December, January and February. Fire remains the major cause of death in the home, with young children and older adults most often the victims.

**DON'T UNDERESTIMATE YOUR RISK OF FIRE!**  
Keep your home warm and safe this winter for you and your children!

### STAYING WARM AND SAFE

Keeping warm in your home should fuel concerns for the safety of your family. During the months of December, January and February, home-heating equipment (central heating units, portable and fixed space heaters and fireplaces) is the second leading cause of home fires.

The major causes of home heating fires are poorly maintained systems, placing space heaters too close to combustible items and flaws in construction and installation of the heating units.

### SAFELY HEAT YOUR HOME BY FOLLOWING THESE GUIDELINES:

- Have a qualified technician install all new equipment.
- Have a qualified professional inspect your equipment annually. The inspection will ensure that the system is maintained in proper working order and identify if any parts require repair or replacement.
- Schedule regular cleanings of your boiler, furnace and hot water heater, including the chimney and chimney connectors.
- Have your wood-burning stove or fireplace inspected every year by a professional, including the chimney and connectors.
- Keep a glass or metal screen in front of fireplace openings to prevent embers or sparks from jumping out.
- Never burn charcoal indoors. **Burning charcoal can give off lethal amounts of carbon monoxide.**
- Before going to sleep **be sure your fireplace fire is out!**



### Portable Gas Fueled Space Heaters

The use of kerosene or propane space heaters is **strictly prohibited and illegal in New York City.** The use of these types of space heaters poses a high risk of death and injury.

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SMOKE ALARMS SAVE LIVES

CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS SAVE LIVES

SMOKE ALARMS SAVE LIVES

A Public Fire Safety Message From The New York City Fire Department

FD  
NY

YOUR SAFETY IS OUR MISSION

PROUDLY SERVING NEW YORK SINCE 1865



# 1

## ELECTRIC HEATERS & BLANKETS

### ELECTRIC SPACE HEATERS

When purchasing an electric space heater, look for heaters with automatic shut-off features.

#### ***GIVE SPACE HEATERS SPACE***

Heaters should be placed at least 3 feet from any combustible material such as bedding and furniture.

- **Never use an extension cord** with a space heater.
- Inspect the electrical cord before each use for damage.
- Keep young children and pets away from space heaters.
- Only use equipment that has the Underwriters Laboratories (UL) Mark.
- Avoid using electric space heaters in bathrooms or other areas where they may come in contact with water.
- **Turn off/unplug the space heater** whenever you leave the room or go to sleep.
- **Never use the kitchen oven** or gas range to heat your home or apartment.

***Such improper use could cause dangerous levels of carbon monoxide to accumulate causing severe illness and possible death.***



Electric space heater with thermostat and automatic shut-off.



Kerosene space heaters are not legal to use in NYC.

### ELECTRIC BLANKETS

With the rising costs of heating energy, you may choose to use an electric blanket to help keep you warm on a cold winter's night. However, **misused or damaged blankets can easily become an ignition source for a fire.**

**FOR A SAFE NIGHT'S SLEEP** follow these recommendations for using electric blankets:

- Only use electric blankets that have the Underwriters Laboratories (UL) Mark.
- Replace all electric blankets that are more than 10 years old. (99% of blankets fires have been caused by blankets 10 years or older.)
- Purchase blankets with an automatic safety shut-off. (The device will shut-off the blanket if the temperature gets too high.)

- Always buy new electric blankets; second-hand blankets may not be safe.
- Replace any electric blanket that has broken or frayed cords or has scorch marks.
- Avoid tucking the electric blanket in at the sides of the bed.
- Avoid placing other blankets or comforters on top of an electric blanket while in use.
- It is best to warm the bed with your electric blanket and turn it off before going to bed.

**Electric blankets also present a burn risk to those who cannot feel heat or are unable to react appropriately.** Therefore, never place an electric blanket on a baby, small child or anyone with physical limitations that may prevent them from turning the control off or removing the blanket from their body.

# 2

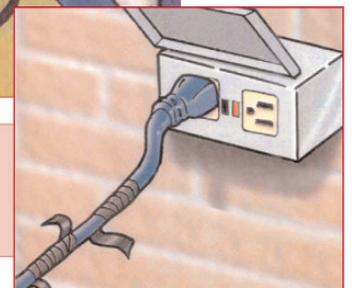
## MAKE YOUR HOME ELECTRICALLY SAFE

**W**orn, damaged or improperly used electrical cords cause most home electrical fires.

Take a few minutes this season to **INSPECT THE CONDITION** of your electrical cords, extension cords, plugs and outlets to make your home as safe as possible.

- Do all the electrical appliances and cords have the Underwriters Laboratories (UL) Mark?
- Are cords out from beneath furniture and rugs or carpeting?
- Are cords in good condition, not damaged or frayed?
- Do extension cords carry more than their proper load?

- Are any outlets or switches unusually warm or hot to the touch?
- Do all outlets and switches have cover plates?
- Is any cover plate discolored? (Discoloration could indicate that the wiring behind the plate is overheating.)
- Do all electrical plugs fit snugly into their outlets?
- Are any outlets overloaded with more than two appliances?



#### **REMEMBER:**

**Extension cords are for temporary use only and not to be used as a permanent extension of a home's wiring system.**

**CARBON MONOXIDE (CO)** is a colorless, odorless, tasteless and toxic gas. Nicknamed "**the silent killer**", carbon monoxide is totally undetectable by human senses. Hundreds of people are killed in their home each year by accidental carbon monoxide poisoning and thousands are permanently injured.

Since carbon monoxide is a by-product of incomplete combustion, any fuel-burning appliance, vehicle or tool that is inadequately vented or maintained can be a **potential source** of carbon monoxide gas. Examples of fuel-burning equipment include:

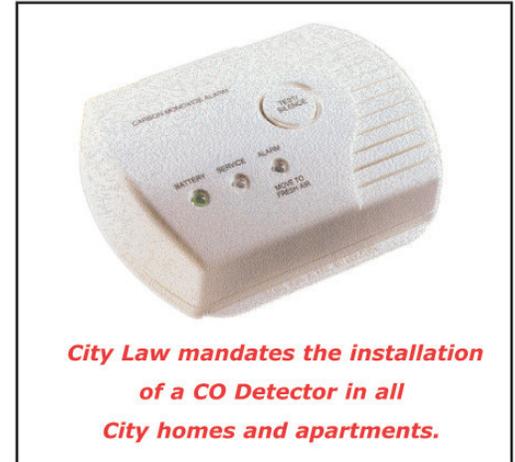
- Gas and oil fueled furnaces
- **Gas fueled space heaters\***
- Gas ranges and ovens
- Gas clothes dryers
- Gas and oil fueled water heaters
- Wood-burning fireplaces and stoves
- Gas fireplaces, both vented and ventless
- Gas lawnmowers and power tools
- Automobiles

*\*The use of kerosene or propane space heaters is strictly prohibited in NYC.*

People are at an increased risk of carbon monoxide poisoning during the winter months. Well-insulated, airtight homes (primarily newer construction) and **malfunctioning** heating equipment can produce dangerously high and potentially deadly concentrations of carbon monoxide.

**To prevent or minimize the potential for exposure to carbon monoxide gas, have your home-heating systems, fuel-burning appliances, flues and chimneys inspected, cleaned and tuned up annually by a qualified technician.**

- Make regular visual inspections of fuel-burning appliances such as your gas dryer and hot water heater.
- Do not burn charcoal inside a home, cabin or camper.
- Do not operate gasoline-powered engines (generators, cutting saws) in confined areas such as garages or basements.
- Do not idle your car inside the garage.
- During and after a snowstorm, make sure vents for the gas dryer, furnace, stove and fireplace are clear of snow build-up.
- Never use gas ovens and ranges to heat your home!**



## MOST FIRE FATALITIES OCCUR IN HOMES WITHOUT A WORKING SMOKE ALARM.

The majority of home fire deaths are children.



## CHECK YOUR BATTERY!

Smoke alarms are often set off by bathroom steam or cooking vapors. **Never remove the battery or disconnect the wiring.**

**Protect yourself and your family by purchasing and installing smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.**

A properly working carbon monoxide detector alarm can provide an early warning, before deadly gases build up to dangerous levels.

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## TURKEY FRYERS COME WITH SAFETY CONCERNS

In recent years deep-frying turkeys has become increasingly popular, however this new tradition is a recipe for a holiday tragedy!

**The use of turkey fryers are considered a serious injury and fire risk.**

As the turkey is placed in the hot oil, oil may spill from the fryer onto the burner causing a fire.

Turkey fryers can easily tip over, spilling the hot oil onto anyone nearby.

Most turkey fryers do not have an automatic thermostat control. With no temperature control the oil could overheat to the point of combustion and cause a fire.

The turkey fryers, including the lid and handles get extreme hot and may cause burns.

Partially frozen turkeys placed into the fryer can cause a spillover effect.

Underwriters Laboratories (UL) has decided not to safety certify any turkey fryers due to the increasing number of fires and burn injuries related to their use.

**THIS** →  
**CAN EASILY TURN**  
**INTO THIS.**



**DON'T LET IT**  
**HAPPEN TO YOU.**

# 5

## CLOTHES DRYER FIRES

Clothes dryers are responsible for thousands of fires each year. Fires can occur when lint builds up in the dryer or in the exhaust duct. Lint can block the flow of air, cause excessive heat build-up and result in a fire.

### To help prevent fires:

- ◆ Clean the lint screen/filter before or after drying each load of clothes.
- ◆ Clean the dryer vent and exhaust duct periodically.
- ◆ Clean behind the dryer, where lint can build up.
- ◆ Replace plastic or foil, accordion-type ducting material with rigid or corrugated semi-rigid metal duct.

### DRYER VENT AND EXHAUST DUCT LINT BUILD-UP



**LINT BUILD-UP**  
**FIRE HAZARD**



**LINT FREE**

# 6

## CHILDREN & FIRE

### WHAT PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS CAN DO!



- ✓ Have a matches and lighter round-up. Ask your children to tell you where all the matches and lighters are located throughout your home.
- ✓ Store lighters and matches out of sight and reach, preferably in a locked cabinet or drawer.

This includes multi-purpose or barbecue style lighters.

✓ Check under beds and in closets for burned matches or hidden lighters. Approximately half of the child fire starters had previously played with matches or a lighter.

✓ Use a " don't touch" approach with children under five years of age. Instruct them to show you any unattended matches or lighter. Reward them with praise when they do.



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