

# STATE OF NEBRASKA

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**Dave Heineman**  
Governor



**STATE FIRE MARSHAL**  
**John Falgione**  
Fire Marshal

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

January 14 2009, 1645

Contact: Ray Nance (402) 471-2027

### **State Fire Marshal Releases Alert on Alternate Heating**

Unfortunately, home is where a fire is most likely to hit. Each year, heating equipment is involved in roughly 70,000 reported home fires according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). The cost of these fires goes far beyond just money and property damage with more than 600 deaths and almost 1,600 injuries on average each year. Heating equipment fires kill two people every day. With recent cold weather here in Nebraska, alternate heating fires are on the rise, with at least two related fatalities.

While home heating fires are quite prevalent, they are largely preventable. The Nebraska State Fire Marshal's Office is encouraging you to not let this tragedy happen to you. With your help, we can reduce the number of home heating fires in Nebraska.

Here are just a few simple ways you can decrease the risk of a heating fire in your home:

#### **Portable electric space heaters**

- Turn heaters off when you go to bed or leave the room.
- Use and purchase portable space heaters with an auto shut off so if they're tipped over they will shut off.
- Space heaters need space, place space heater on solid, flat surface at least 3 feet away from anything that can burn such as paper, bedding, furniture, and people.

#### **Fuel-burning space heaters**

- Always use the proper fuel as specified by the manufacturer.
- When refueling, allow the appliance to cool and refuel outside or in a well-ventilated area.
- If the pilot light of your gas heater goes out, allow 5 minutes or more for the gas to go away before trying again, do not allow gas to accumulate, and light the match before you turn on the gas to the pilot to avoid risk of flashback.

☐ **MAIN OFFICE**  
☐ **DISTRICT A**  
246 South 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
Lincoln, NE 68508-1804  
(402) 471- 2027

☐ **DISTRICT B**  
438 West Market  
Albion, NE 68620-1241  
(402)-395-2164

☐ **DISTRICT C**  
200 South Silber  
North Platte, NE 69101-4219  
(308) 535-8181

**Fuels Division**  
☐ **FLST** ☐ **Pipeline**  
246 South 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
Lincoln, NE 68508-1804  
(402) 471-9465

☐ **TRAINING DIVISION**  
2410 North Wheeler Avenue  
Suite 112  
Grand Island, NE 68801-2376  
(308) 385-6892

## Wood and pellet-burning stoves

- Have your chimney inspected each year and cleaned if necessary.
- Wood stoves should bear the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- In wood stoves, burn only dry, seasoned wood. In pellet stoves, burn only dry, seasoned wood pellets.
- Keep the doors of your wood stove closed unless loading or stoking the live fire.

## Fireplaces

- Have your chimney inspected each year and cleaned if necessary.
- Use a sturdy fireplace screen.
- Allow ashes to cool before disposing. Dispose of ashes in a metal container.

Never use an oven to heat your home.

Install smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home. Interconnect all smoke alarms through the home – when one sounds, they all sound. Test smoke alarms at least once a month.

Install and maintain a carbon monoxide alarm in a central location outside each sleeping area.

State Fire Marshal John Falgione said, “Working together we can prevent needless fires and deaths.”

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