

Winter Home Fire Safety

The winter months traditionally see more fires in homes related to heating equipment and appliances. Here are some home fire safety tips to follow during the winter months:

1. Pay close attention to potential fire hazards related to the use of fuel-burning appliances, space heaters and even block heaters in their vehicles.
2. Treat block heaters like any other piece of electrical equipment.
3. Ensure cords and connections are in good repair and never overload circuits.
4. Keep intake and exhaust vents for furnaces and heating appliances free of ice and snow accumulations to reduce the risk of carbon monoxide build-up.
5. Install carbon monoxide alarms in addition to smoke and fire alarms in your house.
6. Keep space heaters at least 1 metre (3 feet) away from anything that can burn, including curtains, upholstery and clothing.
7. Replace worn or damaged electrical wire and connections on vehicles and extension cords, and use the proper gauge extension cord for vehicle block heaters. A smaller number like a 10 gauge wire is thicker and will carry more load than a 12 or 14 gauges – thicker is better!
8. Ensure vehicles are not left running inside any garage or building.
9. If you use a fireplace or wood-stove please burn dry, well-seasoned wood to reduce the risk of excessive creosote build-up in chimneys.
10. Consider using approved timers for vehicle block heaters rather than leaving heaters on all night. With a good block heater, 2 to 3 hours is sufficient to warm an engine in cold weather.