



Mammoth Lakes Fire Protection District
Post Office Box 5, 3150 Main Street
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546
760-934-2300 Fax- 760-934-9210

Press Release

Date: December 16, 2008

Point of Contact: Thom Heller, Phone Number: 934-2300

Did you know that 82% of all fire deaths occur in the home? In recent years, the top 3 days for home fires were: Christmas Day, New Year's Day, and Christmas Eve. Also, remember that deaths due to winter home fires are especially preventable!

Portable electric, kerosene, or other types of space heaters were the most deadly sources of heat from 2003 to 2006, accounting for three-fourths (73%) of the fire deaths related to home heating. Overall, space heaters were responsible for one-fourth (26%) of home heating fires in 2003. Space heaters draw a large amount of electricity and can be easily forgotten in the "on position" when leaving the home/business. You should never use an extension cord or power strip with these types of heating devices.

Safety Tips If You Use Space Heaters:

- Space heaters need space. Keep combustibles and children/pets at least 3 feet from all heat sources. Move combustible items—like furniture, drapes, blankets, and toys—away from all heaters.
- Use only equipment tested and certified by a nationally recognized testing laboratory with automatic off features. Only use space heaters with a control feature that automatically shuts off the power if the heater falls over. Many fires have been started by children/pets that accidentally tipped over heaters!
- Read and follow the manufacturer's operating, inspection, and cleaning recommendations carefully.
- Never leave space heaters on and unattended. Always unplug space heaters before leaving or going to sleep.

Remember the importance of working smoke alarms. Also, make sure your entire family knows and has practiced a safe-exit plan from your home.

Enjoy the holidays, the visiting with family and friends, but do so with safety in mind. The Mammoth Lake Fire Department wishes you and yours a wonderful holiday season and a happy new year. If you would like more information on this or any other related matter, please feel free to contact the station at 934-2300.

January 23, 2009 – Nearly three in four people killed in home heating fires in 2006 died in fires that involved (stationary or portable) space heaters, according to a new report released by the [National Fire Protection Association](#) (NFPA).

Resources: [Audio files](#), [Animated PSA](#)

In 2006, heating equipment was involved in an estimated 64,100 U.S. home structure fires, 540 civilian deaths, 1,400 civilian injuries, and \$943 million in direct property damage. The peak months for home heating fires are December, January, and February. NFPA urges the public to be cautious when using heating equipment.

Other key findings from [Home Fires Involving Heating Equipment](#) report:

- Home heating fires are more likely to occur in the evening and peak between 6:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m.
- Fatal home heating fires are more likely to occur between midnight and 10:00 a.m.
- The leading factor contributing to home heating fires was when heating equipment was left too close to things that can burn.
- Sixty percent of the confined chimney and flue fires (2003-2006) occurred because the chimney was not cleaned.

NFPA offers the following heating safety tips.

- Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from heating equipment, such as the furnace, fireplace, wood stove, or portable heater.
- Only use heating equipment that has the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- Never use your oven for heating.
- Have a qualified professional install stationary space heating equipment, water heaters, or central heating equipment according to the local codes and manufacturer's instructions.
- Maintain heating equipment and chimneys by having them cleaned and inspected annually by a qualified professional.
- Turn portable heaters off when leaving the room or going to bed.
- For fuel burning space heaters, always use the proper fuel as specified by the manufacturer.
- Make sure the fireplace has a sturdy screen to prevent sparks from flying into the room and burn only dry, seasoned wood. Allow ashes to cool before disposing in a metal container, which is kept a safe distance from the home.
- For wood burning stoves, install chimney connectors and chimneys following manufacturer's instructions or have a professional do the installation.
- Make sure all fuel-burning equipment is vented to the outside to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Install and maintain carbon monoxide (CO) alarms to avoid the risk of CO poisoning.
- If you smell gas in your gas heater, do not attempt to light the appliance. Turn off all the controls and open doors and windows. Call a gas service person.
- Test smoke alarms at least monthly.