

## Top 10 Timely Woodburning Tips

Western North Carolina hearth retailers are reporting dramatic increases in wood-burning stove and fireplace sales in response to skyrocketing fuel prices. To aid in the prevention of chimney fires and carbon monoxide intrusion and to help keep wood-burning fireplaces and wood stoves functioning properly, the Chimney Safety Institute of America (CSIA) offers the following safety tips for new and returning wood burners:

**Get an annual chimney check.** Have chimneys inspected annually, and cleaned as necessary, by a qualified professional chimney service technician. This reduces the risk of fires and carbon monoxide poisonings due to creosote buildup or obstructions in the chimneys.

**Keep it clear.** Keep tree branches and leaves at least 15 feet away from the top of the chimney.

**Install a chimney cap** to keep debris, water, and animals out of the chimney.

**Choose the right fuel.** For burning firewood in wood stoves or fireplaces, choose well-seasoned wood that has been split for a minimum of six months to one year and stored in a covered and elevated location. Never burn Christmas trees or treated wood in your fireplace or wood stove.

**Build it right.** Place firewood or fire logs at the rear of the fireplace on a supporting grate. To start the fire, use kindling or a commercial firelighter. Never use flammable liquids.

**Keep the hearth area clear.** Combustible material too close to the fireplace or woodstove could easily catch fire. Keep furniture at least 36" away from the hearth.

**Use a fireplace screen.** Use metal mesh or a screen in front of the fireplace to contain flying sparks that could ignite or burn holes in the carpet or flooring.

**Be careful not to overload the fireplace.** Add one manufactured fire log at a

time or no more than a couple of pieces of firewood. A fireplace is not designed to function as an incinerator and should never be used to burn glossy paper or garbage.

**Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.** Place detectors throughout the house and check batteries in the spring and fall. When you change your clocks for Daylight Savings Time, remember to check your batteries.

**Never leave a fire unattended.** Before turning in for the evening, be sure that the fire is fully extinguished. Supervise children and pets closely around wood stoves and fireplaces.

The CSIA and The National Fire Protection Association recommend that all chimneys be inspected on an annual basis.

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