



Ocean City Fire Department

PRESS RELEASE

Chris Larmore
Fire Chief

Chuck Barton
Deputy Chief

David Cropper
Deputy Chief

S.E. Villani
Deputy Chief

For Immediate Release-
Contact:

Ryan L. Whittington
Public Information Officer
Ocean City Fire Department
1409 Philadelphia Ave.
Ocean City, MD 21842
Phone: 410-251-1253
rwhittington@ococean.com

H. Stephen Price
Public Information Officer
Ocean City Fire Department
1409 Philadelphia Ave.
Ocean City, MD 21842
Phone: 410-430-5155
hsprice@mail.worcester.k12.md.us

As temperatures cool, the Ocean City Fire Department would like to remind citizens and visitors of Ocean City to consider fire safety as they begin to use various sources of heat in their homes. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), heating equipment was involved in an estimated 66,400 home structure fires reported to U.S. fire departments causing an estimated 580 civilian fire deaths, 1,850 civilian fire injuries, and \$608 million in direct property damage in 2007.

Usually, fires caused by heating sources occur because devices were not cleaned regularly, were placed or installed too close to combustible materials, had design or operational flaws, or were fueled improperly. Here are a few tips to help prevent a heating-related fire in your home:

When purchasing heating devices, make sure they carry an independent testing laboratory label, such as U.L. (Underwriters Laboratories). Follow the manufacturer's directions for installation, use and maintenance of all new heating equipment. Also, make sure to keep anything that could burn at least three feet from all heating devices. Inspect electric heaters for damage like frayed or worn cords every year. Additionally, chimneys and flues of woodstoves and fireplaces should be cleaned and inspected yearly by a professional. Fireplaces should always be screened during use to keep embers and sparks from igniting floor coverings within your home. Lastly, make sure everyone in your home understands the dangers of drying clothes and other combustibles over heating devices.

Although good maintenance of equipment and safe, diligent use of heating equipment can help lessen the risk of a home fire, it cannot entirely prevent it. Working smoke alarms are vital in notification of a fire, allowing you and your family adequate time to escape. Install at least one smoke alarm on every floor of your home (including the basement) and outside each sleeping area. It's a good idea, especially if you sleep with your doors closed, that a smoke alarm is also installed inside your bedroom. Alarms mounted on the wall should be positioned 4-12 inches from the ceiling, while ceiling-mounted alarms should be positioned four inches or more away from the nearest wall. Alarms must be tested every month, and have their batteries replaced twice a year.

In addition, listed CO detectors should be installed in a central location outside of all sleeping areas if your home contains any fuel burning equipment. Test CO alarms monthly and replace the batteries according to the manufacturers recommendations, which is typically twice a year. It is important to remember, CO detectors are not a substitute for smoke detectors

You can access NFPA's webpage at www.nfpa.org, or contact the Ocean City Fire Department – Office of the Fire Marshal, 410-289-8780, for more tips on heating your home safely.