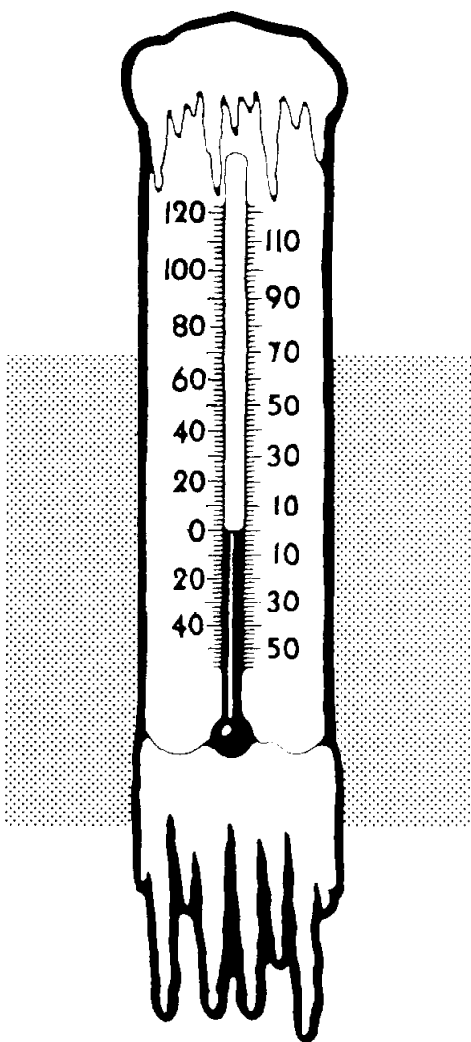
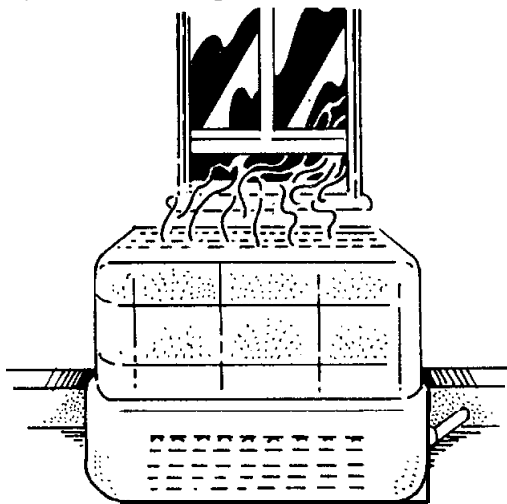


**HEAT
YOUR HOME
SAFELY**



High fuel oil prices have forced many home owners to use wood- and coal-burning stoves, fireplaces and space heaters to heat their homes or to add to existing heating systems. These devices provide extra heat but may create health and safety hazards.

One of the greatest dangers is carbon monoxide — a deadly gas produced by any heating unit that has a flame. A wood, coal or gas stove that is not properly vented (see below) can fill the air with this odorless, invisible gas. A window should always be open about one inch in any room in which a flame-producing heater is operating, to allow deadly fumes to escape.



Unvented Heater

The first signs of carbon monoxide poisoning are a headache, sleepiness, dizziness or nausea. Get fresh air immediately. (Carbon monoxide poisoning can be confused with food poisoning or flu, since the symptoms are similar.)

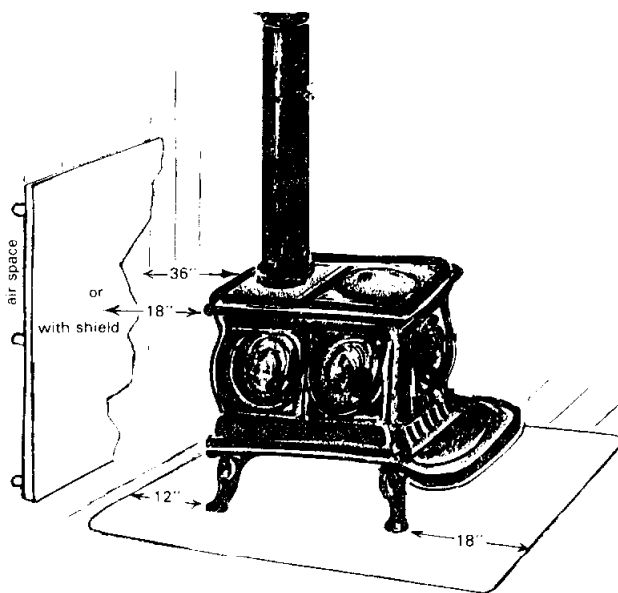
Another danger is creosote — an oily, flammable by-product of wood-burning that builds up inside chimneys and stovepipes and can cause fires. Burning a hot fire for 15 minutes a day can help stop creosote buildup. But chimneys should be checked and cleaned in any event.

Even advances in science are adding to fire hazards. More efficient, air-tight wood heaters burn more slowly than other types of stoves, making more creosote and increasing the chances of chimney fires. And improvements in home insulation can decrease the air flow between indoors and outdoors, allowing carbon monoxide to collect inside.

Read the following information carefully. You may very well prevent property damage and even save a life.

STOVE AND FIREPLACE SAFETY

Never use gasoline, charcoal lighter or other such fuels to light or relight a fire since each can cause an explosion. Never burn charcoal, styrofoam, polystyrene foam or other coated materials inside the home — they can produce deadly fumes. Keep all flammable materials (carpets, curtains, pillows, furniture, clothes, papers) away from the heating unit. Clean flue pipes monthly and chimneys at least once a year, and inspect your heating unit often.



Wood and Coal Stoves

If you are installing a heating unit yourself, follow directions exactly. Your local fire department or building inspector can advise you. Faulty installation of these stoves, along with misuse and creosote buildup, are the main reasons for the current increase in house fires.



Be sure to place stoves on protected floor surfaces such as sheet metal, concrete or stone. The protective floor surface should extend 18 inches beyond the front of the heater and at least 12 inches beyond all other sides.

Place the stove at least three feet from walls that can burn, and 18 inches from protected walls. Protect walls by using a 1-inch fireproof spacer between the wall and protective material. Leave a 1½-inch gap between the protective material and the floor, to allow for air flow. Also:

- Make sure your heater or stove is properly vented. Older or second-hand stoves may produce deadly amounts of carbon monoxide if cracked or not properly adjusted and vented.
- Do not use coal in a wood-binning stove — it can cause the stove to overheat.
- Keep the damper open while the fuel is burning. This ensures efficient burning and will prevent the collection of explosive gases. Try to keep the fire at medium heat. A **very** hot fire can overheat gases which could explode when more coal or wood is added.
- Never make the fire so hot that it changes the color of the stovepipe. If this happens, close the damper quickly.



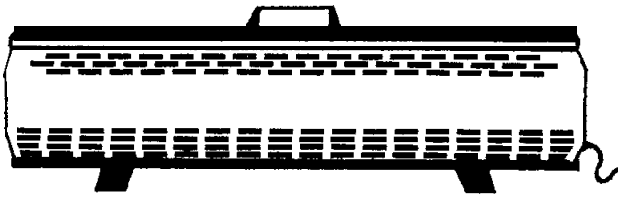
Fireplaces

As the energy crisis worsens, more and more homeowners are installing fireplaces or putting old ones back into use. However, a fireplace is the least efficient of all heating sources and may not be worth the risks. Follow these safety tips:

- Artificial logs made of sawdust and wax can explode if stacked on each other or when added to a natural wood fire. Do not poke artificial logs, because the flaming wax could stick to the poker and drop onto the floor, carpet or you.
- Do not overload the fireplace since that can lead to overheating of wall or roof materials.
- *Never* soak home-rolled newspaper logs in gasoline or kerosene. They should be soaked only in water.
- Make sure the fire is completely out before **going to bed or** leaving the house.

SPACE HEATERS

Never use a gas or kerosene space heater that is not vented through a chimney or flue. **It is extremely dangerous.** If you must use an unvented flame-producing heater, leave a window open. Make sure the unit has an adequate guard or shield around the flames or heating coil. Be careful to locate the heater so that it does not block fire exits such as doors and stairs. Keep at least a three-foot safety clearance on all sides.



Electric

- An electric heater should have an automatic switch on the bottom to cut off electric power if the heater is tipped over.
- Electric shock can occur if a portable electric heater is dropped into a bathtub, shower or sink. Never touch an electric heater if you are wet,
- Check electrical wiring to make sure it is in good condition. Only a heavy duty, 15-amp extension cord should be used with an electric heater.

Gas or Kerosene

- Deadly amounts of carbon monoxide can collect if the heater is poorly adjusted or dirty.
- To avoid explosions when lighting a heater, don't give gas time to collect. Turn heater on only when you have a match ready. If you don't light the heater on the first try, turn it off before trying again.

FURNACES

Have your gas, oil or wood furnace cleaned and checked by an expert before and during winter. Be aware that excessively warm ceilings and walls near the furnace, or any heating source, can be a fire danger signal.

FIRE SAFETY RULES

1. Sleep with bedroom or ball doors closed. Many people die without ever waking as a result of the smoke and poisonous gases produced in a fire. Doors can slow the spread of gas and flames, allowing time to escape.
2. Install smoke detectors in your home.
3. Check your chimney for loose or missing bricks. Are there cracks in it? Is it dirty or unlined?
4. Have the chimney cleaned at least once a year to prevent creosote build-up. Or clean it yourself with a wire brush or by lowering and raising a heavily weighted burlap bag inside the chimney.
5. Be sure your heating unit is approved by a major testing laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratory, Gas Manufacturers Association or Factory Mutual.
6. Ask your local fire department to check your heater or chimney.
7. Before installing a wood stove, check with your insurance agent to make sure you are properly covered.
8. Never store flammable liquids near a heating unit. Fumes from the liquid can travel and catch fire.
9. Keep plenty of sand or water or a fire extinguisher nearby.
10. Place ashes that might contain live coals outdoors in metal containers.
11. Never bum leaves or pine needles in a fireplace or stove. They flare up too rapidly and can overheat the unit.
12. Never use gas cooking stoves to heat rooms.

For more information, contact:
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