



Winter Fire Safety

Carbon Monoxide

State Fire Marshal Randy Cole would like to caution Missourians again this year to the potential fire and carbon monoxide hazards winter weather situations create. “Unfortunately many Missourians turn to using devices not designed for use as a supplemental heat source thereby placing themselves and others in life threatening situations,” Cole said. “It is important to maintain fire safety awareness throughout the winter.”

Too many preventable fires occur year-round, especially during the winter months. During this time Missourians should examine heating methods, practice fire escape plans and check smoke detectors. Fires related to home heating are primarily responsible for the increased number of fires during the winter.

State Fire Marshal Cole stresses the importance of ensuring a home has working **smoke and carbon monoxide alarms** and testing them monthly to ensure they’re in working order. The advance warning these alarms provide can prevent tragedy by giving families enough time to get out of their house alive.

All gasoline and diesel generators create carbon monoxide, a colorless, odorless, tasteless gas that inhibits the body’s ability to absorb oxygen, a condition that can cause serious health problems, and even death, within a matter of minutes. The first symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning usually include headache, lightheadedness, dizziness and unexplained sleepiness.

Tips for winter storm fire safety:

- Use battery operated lanterns or flashlights instead of candles and oil lamps during power outages.
- Keep generators outside of occupied buildings and never run a generator in an attached garage.
- Never use fossil fueled (propane, kerosene or heating oil) space heaters in an enclosed room; these heaters require a well ventilated area to prevent the accumulation of carbon monoxide.
- Keep chimneys, fireplaces and flues clean and never use a liquid fuel or cardboard to start a fire in a woodstove or fireplace.

- Do not use extension cords to power electric space heaters or use any electric heater that has the cord frayed, repaired or improperly replaced.
- Vehicle exhaust fumes contain large quantities of carbon monoxide. Never run a vehicle in a garage. If you are stuck in a vehicle, make sure the exhaust pipe is clear of snow, ice or debris and only run the engine for short periods to maintain warmth in the vehicle.

For more information about planning for a winter emergency, you should contact your local emergency officials. The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (www.dhss.mo.gov), offers the Ready-in- 3 Emergency Plan Guide. (http://www.dhss.mo.gov/Ready_in_3/)

For information concerning winter fire safety, contact your local fire department, the Missouri State Fire Marshal's Office at (573)751-2930, or on the Internet at, <http://www.dfs.dps.mo.gov/>.

