



Bexar County Fire Marshal

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Bexar County Residents Asked to Use Caution When Heating Homes

The recent below-freezing weather has many Bexar County residents looking to keep warm. In many cases, this means using stoves, ovens and other potentially dangerous sources. The Bexar County Fire Marshal Office (FMO) advises that while using questionable heat sources may provide temporary warmth, please use only safe means of heating.

“This time of year, we see an increase of home fires,” stated Bexar County Fire Marshal, Chris Lopez. “Unfortunately we see many cases where residents have used their stove or other sources for heat inside their home to stay warm and then the fire quickly spreads to the rest of the house. Hopefully, we can prevent the loss of life and property this season, by asking everyone to use caution by properly heating their home.”

The FMO offers the following safety tips:

- Keep all fireplaces, wood stoves, radiators, space heaters or candles at least three feet away from anything that can burn, such as curtains, carpet, mattresses, and blankets.
- Have a three-foot “kid-free zone” around open fires and space heaters.
- Never use an oven to heat your home.
- Turn off and unplug space heaters when leaving the room or going to bed.
- Make sure the heater has an automatic shutoff, so if it tips over, it shuts off.
- Maintain heating equipment and chimneys by having them cleaned and inspected each year by a professional.
- Make sure the fireplace has a sturdy screen to stop sparks from flying into the room. Ashes should be cool before putting them in a metal container. Keep the container a safe distance away from your home.
- Do not burn paper in your fireplace.
- Put the fire out before you go to sleep or leave your home.
- Have your furnace inspected each year.
- Install smoke alarms in every bedroom and test monthly.
- Create a home fire escape plan.

The FMO and Bexar County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) offer many resources and guides online in regards to home fire safety. Lopez encourages everyone to be prepared and to have a plan. Please visit the following links for more information:

<https://www.bexar.org/630/Fire-Marshal>
<http://www.bexar.org/819/Home-Fires>

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