

Fire Safety & Prevention

February 2026 Newsletter

Winter brings cozy moments, warm meals & glowing candles, but it's also the season with the highest number of house fires.



With more cooking, heating, and time spent indoors, the chances for an emergency rise. Cooking remains the leading cause of home fires nationwide, especially those, "I just stepped away for a second" moments, while heating equipment like space heaters and fireplaces can add extra risk. Since children are especially vulnerable during home fires, a little planning, prevention and practice can go a long way toward keeping your family safe.

Winter Fire Safety Tips (Cold Weather Edition)

SPACE HEATERS:

- Only use on **solid, flat surfaces at least 3+ feet** from people, pets & flammable objects (including bedding, curtains, etc.).
- **Get an automatic shut-off model** incase it gets kicked or knocked over.
- **Always plug directly into a wall** - the wattage is too high for an extension cord.
- **Turn off when unattended or sleeping**



PLAN & PREPARE:

- **Download a free family escape plan** & PRACTICE it - Don't wait!
- **Keep exits clear at all time.**
- **Consider an emergency ladder** & know how to use it if you live on the 2nd or 3rd floors.
- **Keep fire hydrants clear!** Removing snow can cost the Fire Dept. precious time during a fire!
- **Test smoke & CO alarms once per month** & have a fire extinguisher/fire blankets at home.



FIREPLACES & CANDLES:

- **Install a screen** to contain sparks & protect children and pets from burns or flames.
- **Never leave candles unattended:** Keep away from flammable items and out of bedrooms.
- **Candle warmers are a good alternative** to flames, but be cautious of little hands & hot wax!



POWER OUTAGES:

- **Only run generators outside,** 20+ feet away from your home to prevent carbon monoxide entering your home.
- Use battery lights or flashlights in an outage.
- Don't use a gas stove for heat - it can cause CO



To learn more, visit www.mass.gov/fire-safety-for-the-public & www.nfpa.org

Family activity:

The Fitchburg Fire Department offers tours of the firehouse. Bring the family to explore and learn more about fire safety! Call 978-345-9666 & ask for the Deputy Chief on duty to schedule a tour!

