

Practicing fire safety during the Winter months

Posted by [Alan Van Wormer](#) On 01/11/2019

PIKESVILLE, Md. -- As of January 11, 2019 there have been six fire fatalities across the state. Y of those fatalities DID NOT HAVE WORKING SMOKE ALARMS in their homes. If you cannot afford a smoke alarm PLEASE contact your local fire department to inquire as to what assistance is available in your area.

State Fire Marshal Brian S. Geraci reminds all residents of Maryland to check for fire safety where they live, work, attend classes, training and meetings. "Fire and life safety is everyone's responsibility; by testing smoke alarms and CO detectors, keeping exits clear of obstructions, and maintaining fire alarms and fire sprinkler systems, we can all avoid injury or death from the effects of fire."

To ensure your best chances of surviving a fire, the State Fire Marshal offers the following tips on both escaping a fire and preventing one:

Test smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors to ensure they are working properly. Remember, the effects of toxic smoke and gases can quickly overcome your ability to think clearly. Every second counts when escaping a fire. Also check the dates on your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors, if they are 10 years old or older, they should be replaced.

Check exits in both your home and any place you go to ensure you will be able to get to safety. Blocked exits resulting from improperly placed chairs, tables or even holiday decorations can result in the delay of getting out quickly and safely. Be vigilant of these safety concerns whether at church, school or your local favorite eatery. Ensure snow is removed from the outside of doors as well.

When using portable non-vented fuel-fired heaters, such as kerosene heaters, make sure to use only the recommended fuel specified in the owner's manual and NEVER use gasoline. Note: Portable kerosene heaters are banned for use in Baltimore City.

If you find it necessary to use an electric space heater, use only one that has been approved by an authorized testing laboratory such as UL. Plug space heaters directly into an outlet. NEVER use an extension cord or power strip as they can easily overheat and cause a fire.

Keep all portable space heaters at least three feet away from anything combustible.

If heating equipment fails, do not use kitchen stoves or ovens to supply heat. These appliances are not designed for that purpose and the chance of a fire improves greatly.

When using fireplaces, wood stoves or pellet stoves; please ensure these heat sources have been installed and properly serviced by trained technicians according to state and local codes, allowing them to work at peak efficiency and lower the risk of a catastrophic failure. Place ashes in a metal container with a lid.

Please ensure you have the chimney cleaned and inspected before use.

Never leave candles burning unattended. Extinguish the flame before leaving the room. Consider battery operated candles instead of flaming candles for safety.

If a fire occurs inside your home, close the doors behind you as you vacate to the outside, call 911 and never go back inside the home. Tell arriving first responders if anyone is still inside.

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