

City of Olean Fire Prevention Month Safety Tips

Happy Fall to All,

Do the chilly temperatures have you dreaming of cozy gatherings around a brightly lit fire? Whether your ideal winter retreat is in the warm glow of the family room fireplace or sitting by a fire under the stars, the City of Olean Fire Department says safety should be your first priority. Follow these helpful tips to keep you and your family safe when you use fireplaces and wood stoves:

“Have your fireplace and wood stoves inspected before you begin using them each year,” says Fire Chief Tim Richardson. “Have the chimney cleaned to remove creosote, which can ignite and start a chimney fire.”

Use a tempered glass or metal screen over the fireplace opening to keep sparks inside. Never use papers, trash or liquid fuel. Burn only wood in fireplaces and wood or wood pellets in wood stoves.

Keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet away from fireplaces and wood stoves. The openings can get hot enough to burn skin, so keep children and pets far away from them. When you’re finished with your fire, put it out before you leave home or fall asleep. When you clean up, place the ashes inside a metal can with a lid. Store the can outside, away from the home, until the ashes are completely cold.

Your home’s heating systems are getting ready to work double time to keep you warm this winter. Safety must be your top priority since heating is the second leading cause of home fires. Please have your furnaces and boilers serviced and inspected by a qualified service technician to ensure they are operating safely and efficiently. Inefficient heating systems can not only lead to fires but emission of carbon monoxide, which is odorless, tasteless and deadly.

Use only portable heaters that have been listed by a testing laboratory (look for the laboratory’s label). These heaters should have an automatic shut-off switch so that if they are tipped over, they will turn off on their own. Plug portable electric heaters directly into the wall outlet; don’t use an extension cord or power strip. Kerosene heaters must be refueled outside.

General Fire Safety

Never leave children unattended around fire.

Prevent burn injuries by keeping children at least 3 feet away.

Store matches and lighters out of children’s sight and reach.

Never let children see you play with fire.

Ensure all smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are working. If applicable, due to the new ten year sealed detectors, change their batteries when you change your clocks.

Ensure your dryer and heat vents are clean as well as unobstructed.

Evenings (5-8 p.m.) are the peak time for home heating fires. Turn space heaters off when you leave the room or fall asleep.

Younger and Older Fire Safety

“Older adults are at increased risk from home fires,” says Fire Chief Tim Richardson. “Older adults have a higher home fire death rate, and heating is the second leading cause of fire deaths for people ages 65 and over.”

Plan for emergencies. Older adults may move more slowly or have trouble hearing a smoke alarm because of hearing loss. Make a home fire escape plan around their abilities.

Keep the telephone, hearing aids, and eyeglasses next to the bed. If someone in your care uses a cane or wheelchair, decide who will help him or her get out in an emergency.

Ensure that trip hazards are minimized in your homes as this can inhibit a quick escape.

Ensure that everyone is practicing your “Exit Drills in the Home” twice a year.

Keep your doors closed at night to give you extra protection in case of a fire during the night.

If a fire occurs and you get out, stay out. Do not go back in for any reason.

Halloween Safety Thoughts

Children love the costumes, treats and friendly frights of Halloween parties and going door to door. These can be safe and fun activities for all of us, even younger children. But the City of Olean Fire Department wants parents to know that flames can quickly ruin Halloween festivities.

You can keep your child safe from fire and burn injuries by following these six tips:

Children are naturally drawn to glowing jack-o'-lanterns and other flickering lights. Instead of flames, use battery-powered candles or flashlights to decorate. Lit candle flames can burn children. If children come too close to the flame, their clothing can catch on fire. Battery-powered candles are the safer choice.

Make sure that all decorations are kept away from flames and other types of heat.

Keep all matches and lighters locked up. They should be in a high place out of your child's reach. Teach young children that they must not touch or play with these tools, ever. If they find matches or lighters, they should tell an adult where they are.

Choose a costume with fire safety in mind. Fabric can catch fire if children walk close to flames. Avoid loose fabric and features that dangle or drag behind the child. Keep costume sleeves tight. Look for a fabric label that reads “flame-resistant” or “flame-retardant.” Keep a close eye on your child. Even flame-resistant fabric can burn.

Never let children play with or carry lit candles. Give each child a flashlight to carry while trick-or-treating. Check porches for lit candles, torches and other flames before letting children approach the door.

The last tip is the most important: Young children need adult supervision at all times. Stay alert. Watch children closely at parties and as they go door to door.

On behalf of the City of Olean Fire Department please stay safe and enjoy the fall season.