

CITY OF OLEAN FIRE DEPARTMENT FIRE PREVENTION MEDIA RELEASE HOME HEATING SYSTEMS

The City of Olean Fire Department says safety must be your top priority since heating is the second leading cause of home fires. Follow the City of Olean Fire Department's suggestions to keep your home warm and safe.

"The biggest mistake is putting something too close to a heating source," says Fire Chief Tim Richardson. "Keep anything that can burn 3 feet away from space heaters, fireplaces, wood stoves, and radiators." Remember that skin burns too. Make sure that people and pets stay 3 feet away.

Use 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.

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

"Older adults are at increased risk from home fires," says Chief 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."

If you care for an older adult, plan for this increased risk. Check space heaters throughout the season. Make sure that bedding, throws and clothing are kept at least 3 feet away. Verify that fixed heating equipment is inspected every season and professionally cleaned when necessary. Talk with older adults to make sure that they understand their risk of burns and fire.

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.