

## The Moreno Valley Fire Department Offers the Following Chimney Maintenance and Fire Prevention Tips:

The maintenance of your chimney will make a big difference in the safety and operation of your fireplace. Chimney fires are common and highly dangerous, mainly caused by creosote build-up.

- Maintain a safe perimeter. Keep all tree limbs and other objects at least (10 feet) feet from the top of your chimney.
- **Instruct your family** on safe fireplace, furnace and stove practices.
- **Retrofit a chimney cap** on your existing chimney if you don't have one now. (Chimney caps should be metal with 1/2 to 3/8 openings) Chimney caps keep leaves and animals out of your chimney that could create dangerous obstructions.
- **Use appropriate fuel.** Green wood, dismantled furniture and other questionable material should not be used. Use your fireplace or other warming stoves in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If you have doubts about a particular fuel, err on the side of caution. Never put wood in a non-wood burning stove.
- **Build fires correctly.** Add kindling or fire-logs in the back of the grate and support them so they don't slip. Use kindling, and never add materials of a questionable nature, even small ones. Burning substances that don't flare up can still release colorless and odorless toxic gasses into your home or the environment.
- Make sure your fireplace has a sturdy screen to prevent sparks from flying into the room.
- **Clear the hearth or surrounding areas.** Never keep old rags, newspaper, furniture or other objects near your stove, furnace or fireplace. If there's an open flame or high heat, be sure to maintain a safe zone of 36 inches or more.
- **Don't leave fires unattended.** Stay safe by developing good fire maintenance habits. Never leave a room where there's an open flame, even a candle. You never know what will happen.
- Have yearly maintenance and inspections on your chimney by a qualified professional.



## The Moreno Valley Fire Department Offers the Following Home Heating Safety Tips:

There is something about the winter months and curling up with a good book by the fireplace. But did you know that heating equipment is one of the leading causes of home fire deaths? With a few simple safety tips and precautions you can prevent most heating fires from happening.

BE WARM AND SAFE THIS WINTER!

- Keep anything that can burn at least three-feet away from heating equipment, such as the furnace, fireplace, wood stove, or portable space heater.
- Have a three-foot “kid free zone” around open fires and space heaters.
- Never use your kitchen over or stove to heat your home
- Have a qualified professional install stationary space heating equipment according to the local codes and manufacturer’s instructions.
- Have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year by a qualified professional.
- Remember to turn portable heaters off when leaving the room or going to bed.
- Always use the right kind of fuel, specified by the manufacturer, for fuel burning space heaters.
- Ashes should be cool before putting them in a metal container. Keep the container a safe distance away from your home.
- Test smoke alarms monthly. Smoke detector batteries should be changed twice a year when we change the clocks.
- Install and maintain carbon monoxide (CO) alarms to avoid the risk of CO poisoning.

**For additional information, please click on the following link:**

<http://www.nfpa.org/safety-information/safety-tip-sheets>

## **The Importance of Fire Safety during the Holiday Season:**

Many residents bring live trees into their houses to celebrate the holiday season, but those live trees tend to dry out over time and can become dangerous fire hazards. Between 2009-2013, U.S. fire departments responded to an average of 210 home fires that started with Christmas trees per year. These fires caused an average of 7 deaths, 19 injuries, and \$17.5 million in direct property damage annually. It is recommended that in addition to watering and caring for your tree, that everyone keeps candles and other sources of ignition well away from their live trees. Other recommendations that may help in ensuring safety are:

- Keep trees securely upright in a stand to ensure that it will not accidentally tip over or be knocked over by children or pets
- Keep your tree away from any and all heat sources. This includes electrical outlets, radiators, space heaters, and fireplaces.
- Make sure natural trees are well watered.
- If you have purchased an artificial tree, please make sure it is labeled “fire retardant”.
- Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Connect no more than three strands of mini string sets and a maximum of 50 bulbs for screw-in bulbs. Read manufacturer’s instructions for number of



LED strands to connect.

- Unplug the tree lights before leaving your home or before going to bed.
- Use a maximum of three strands of tree lights on a single extension cord.
- Dispose of your tree at an appropriate recycling center promptly after the holiday season.

## The Office of Emergency Management Offers the Following Information:



It's not possible to predict what this flu season will be like. The Office of Emergency Management would like residents to know that flu viruses are constantly changing so it's not unusual for new flu viruses to appear each year. The timing of flu is very unpredictable and can vary from season to season. Flu activity most commonly peaks in the U.S. between December and February. However, seasonal flu activity can begin as early as October and continue to occur as late as May.

The Centers for Disease Control recommends a yearly flu vaccine for everyone 6 months of age and older as the first and most important step in protecting against this serious disease. The seasonal flu vaccine is designed to protect against the main flu viruses that research suggests will cause the most illness during the upcoming flu season. People should begin getting vaccinated soon after flu vaccine becomes available, ideally by October, to ensure that as many people as possible are protected before flu season begins.

Encourage your loved ones to get vaccinated as soon as vaccine becomes available in their communities, preferably by October. Vaccination is especially important for people at high risk for serious flu complications, and their close contacts. Children between 6 months and 8 years of age may need two doses of flu vaccine to be fully protected from flu. Children younger than 6 months are at higher risk of serious flu complications, but are too young to get a flu vaccine. Because of this, safeguarding them from flu is especially important. If you live with or care for an infant younger than 6 months of age, you should get a flu vaccine to help protect them from flu.

In addition to getting vaccinated, you and your loved ones can take everyday preventive actions like staying away from sick people and washing your hands to reduce the spread of germs. If you are sick with flu, stay home from work or school to prevent spreading influenza to others.

***For additional information, please contact the Office of Emergency Management at 951.413.3800.***