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EVERYDAY HERO CT SHARES WINTER HEATING SAFETY TIPS

Home Heating Fires Are A Leading Cause of Death; Most Fires Reported in December-February

December 4, 2017 | Cromwell, CT – The cold weather is finally here to stay! The heat is turned on and fireplaces are roaring. According to the [National Fire Prevention Association](#) (NFPA), heating equipment is a leading cause of home fire deaths. Half of home heating equipment fires are reported during the months of December, January, and February. However, with proper precautions, they can be prevented. The Everyday Hero CT volunteer firefighter recruitment campaign offers the following information for staying fire safe while keeping warm this winter.

“There is nothing like coming in from the bitter cold to the comfort of a warm home,” says Chief Fred Dudek, Everyday Hero CT program manager. “However, no matter what heat source you choose, there are fire dangers. While it’s easy to take short cuts with heating and put off having the furnace and chimney inspected and cleaned each year, it is absolutely not worth the risk.”

Here are some simple steps that can prevent most heating-related fires from happening:

- 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 oven to heat your home.
- Have a qualified professional install stationary space heating equipment, water heaters, or central heating equipment according to the local codes and manufacturer’s instructions.
- Have a qualified professional clean and inspect heating equipment and chimneys every year.
- Remember to turn off portable heaters when leaving the room or going to bed.
- Always use the right kind of fuel, specified by the manufacturer, for fuel burning space heaters.

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- Make sure the fireplace has a sturdy screen to stop sparks from flying into the room. Ashes should be cool before putting them in a metal container. Keep the container a safe distance away from your home.
- Test smoke alarms at least once a month.

In addition, while many enjoy sitting by an open fire on a cold night, open flames inside the home can be dangerous. Check with the local fire marshal's office before putting a fuel fed space heater in an enclosed space. Most unvented space heaters are prohibited by local and state fire codes and ordinances. When using a portable ethanol burning fireplace, be sure to store ethanol fuel in a closed container, away from the fireplace and out of the reach of children. It may not be easy to see the ethanol fuel flame. Always close the lid or use a snuffer to be sure the flame is extinguished before refueling into a cooled fireplace. Use only fuel made specifically for the fireplace. Follow this advice:

- A portable ethanol burning fireplace, and the fuel, should only be used by adults.
- Clean up any fuel spillage and be sure all liquid has evaporated before lighting the fireplace.
- Light the fireplace using a utility lighter or long match.
- An adult should always be present when a portable fireplace is burning.
- Place the fireplace on a sturdy surface away from table edges.
- Never try to move a lit fireplace or one that is still hot.
- Don't pour ethanol fuel in a device that is lit or not completely cool. It may result in a fire or injury.
- Allow the device to cool down for at least 15 minutes before refueling.
- Extinguish the flame when you leave the room, home or go to sleep.

Volunteers Needed

Eighty percent of all fire personnel in Connecticut are volunteers, and the majority of fire departments throughout the state are experiencing a volunteer shortage. Local fire departments need volunteers of all skill levels and abilities, people willing and able to respond to emergencies whenever called upon.

"The skills and experience gained as a volunteer firefighter are invaluable and have a positive and lasting impact on the lives of others," says Dudek. "Those who join their local fire departments sign up for one of the most rewarding opportunities they'll ever have."

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About Everyday Hero CT

A partnership of the [Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association](#) (CFCA) and the [International Association of Fire Chiefs](#) (IAFC), the Everyday Hero CT campaign is a two-year Volunteer Workforce Solutions (VWS) initiative designed to address the shortage of volunteer firefighters in Connecticut. It is helping achieve a viable and sustainable volunteer firefighter workforce fire departments throughout the state. Everyday Hero CT is funded by a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant awarded to the CFCA by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to develop a model to enhance the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. For more information, visit www.EverydayHeroCT.org.

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