

# CAL FIRE NEWS

## RELEASE

### California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection Amador-El Dorado Unit

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## Don't Let Winter Burn You Up

**CAMINO** - "Heating your home safely is key to having a worry free winter. We are always here to respond if you need us but preventing a fire in the first place is the best option. Below are some winter heating safety tips that can save you time, money and possibly your life" advises Unit Chief Kelly Keenan of the Amador-El Dorado Unit of CAL FIRE. In rural areas, heating fires account for 36% of all house fires.

Tips for a warm, worry-free winter: ✓ Make sure your wood burning (pellets or firewood) stove or fire place is clean and ready for the winter. Chimney fires often occur when the first cold nights arrive and someone lights a fire in a stove or fireplace that has not been properly maintained. Creosote builds up over time in your chimney or stove pipe and can catch on fire which can spread to your roof and/or attic. It is best to hire a professional who can check the entire system, not just clean out the chimney or stove pipe.

✓ **Never** use an outdoor heater, such as a patio heater or barbeque, indoors. They are designed to burn fuels such as propane, natural gas or wood all of which release carbon monoxide. Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless, tasteless gas that kills 500 people annually and sends another 15,000 to emergency rooms.

✓ **Never** heat your home with your kitchen oven, they are not designed for that purpose and could overheat and catch fire. If your oven is gas, the resulting carbon monoxide can pose a deadly threat.

✓ If you use space heaters, make sure they are a minimum of three feet away from flammable materials such as curtains, drapes, furniture, etc. Also make sure they will shut off automatically if they are tipped over. Kerosene space heaters are illegal to use inside a home in California. You can use them in a garage or barn where the ventilation is more open and able to dissipate the fumes.

"Ultimately fire safety is your responsibility, so err on the side of caution. Don't do anything that will jeopardize the safety of your family or yourself" warns Chief Keenan. For more winter heating tips go to [www.fire.ca.gov](http://www.fire.ca.gov) or [www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/fa-249-508.pdf](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/fa-249-508.pdf)

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