

## Portable Space Heaters:

When purchasing new units, make sure they bear the mark of a nationally recognized testing laboratory such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL).

When shutting off heaters, follow manufacture's instructions. Only purchase units that have automatic shutoff features.

## Smoke Alarms

Make sure your home is equipped with working smoke alarms. Smoke alarms remain one of the most effective tools in reducing the chance of injury or death from a home fire. Install smoke alarms on all levels of the home, in and near sleeping areas. Avoid placing them in a kitchen or bathroom. Make sure each unit has a fresh battery and test monthly. Take time to develop a home fire escape plan and practice it with the entire family.

For additional safety, consider installing a carbon monoxide detector. Fuel burning heating equipment produces carbon monoxide: an odorless, colorless gas that if not properly vented, can kill. Carbon monoxide alarms are inexpensive safeguards to protect against carbon monoxide poisoning.



### For more information contact:

Howard County Department of  
Fire and Rescue Services  
Office of the Fire Marshal  
6751 Columbia Gateway Drive, 4th Fl.  
Columbia, MD 21046  
(410) 313-6040  
(410) 313-6066 fax  
[www.hcdfrs.org](http://www.hcdfrs.org)

For TTY Service:  
Dial 711 - Maryland Relay

# How To Keep Warm Safely



**These safety tips  
can help protect you  
from fires and burns!**



Department of Fire and Rescue Services  
[www.howardcountymd.gov](http://www.howardcountymd.gov)

Did you know, 20% of Maryland's residential fires are caused by either kerosene heaters, wood stoves, electric heaters, fireplaces, or furnaces? These fires recently accounted for about \$9.5 million in annual property losses and caused more than 5% of civilian injuries.

## The Office of the Fire Marshal suggests...

If you use a wood, coal, or pellet stove or fireplace, have a professional inspect your chimney, chimney connector, and other related equipment every year. Have it professionally cleaned for each cord of wood or each ton of fuel used. A professional should service central heating equipment such as oil burners, natural gas, or propane furnaces annually.

- Provide all home heating systems with at least 3 feet of clear space, away from beds, drapes, furniture and other combustible materials.
- Ensure proper ventilation when heating your home, keep a door or a window slightly open.
- Check local building codes for regulations regarding uses of home heating systems.



## Wood Stoves and Fireplaces

- Have chimneys and fireplaces cleaned annually, beware of creosote buildup.
- Top your chimney with a spark guard.
- Keep the damper open when in use.
- Use a glass screen large enough to cover the fireplace opening.
- Burn dry, well-seasoned hardwood.
- Dispose of cooled ashes in a tightly covered metal container, 15 feet from any structure.

## Gas Heaters

- Inspect gas heaters monthly during the year and weekly during the winter months.
- Examine gas lines for punctures or splits.
- Check the connectors and valves for leaks.

## Kerosene Heaters

- Use only water-clear grade K-1 kerosene. (NEVER USE GASOLINE!)
- Always refuel outside the home and only after the heater has cooled completely.
- Store kerosene in approved and properly labeled containers away from heat and direct sunlight.



## Electrical Heaters

- Place electrical heaters far away from water sources.
- Check wires and fuses for damage and have heater repaired immediately.
- Make sure your home wiring is sufficient to handle the heater's needs.