

Heating is the leading cause of home fires during the months of December, January and February. Two out of three reported home heating fires and associated deaths and injuries involved portable and fixed space heaters and related equipment, such as fireplaces and chimneys.

## Baseboard Heaters

Baseboard heaters are very efficient, but they must be used with care. Common sense and good housekeeping can prevent a baseboard heater fire.

### What to do

- Check baseboard heaters often and remove objects that have fallen on top or near the heater.
- Keep all furniture a safe distance from your heaters. Never block the flow of heat.
- Never permit electrical cords to drape across heaters
- Always hire an experienced electrician to perform any necessary repair work on your baseboard heaters.

## Portable Heaters

Portable models heat up rapidly, and like baseboard heaters, they can easily ignite any combustible item left nearby,

When shopping for a portable heater, choose a model with:

- Temperature control
- An automatic shut-off device
- A seal of approval from an independent testing laboratory, indicating that it has met basic safety standards.

### What to do

- Keep portable heaters three feet away from anything that can burn
- Always place portable heaters on flat surfaces
- Always turn the heater off when you leave the room or go to sleep.
- Avoid using household extension cords with portable heaters. If you must use an extension cord, make certain that it is a heavy-duty cord and that you unplug it when you leave the room.

## Fireplaces and Woodstoves

If you use a fireplace to heat your home have your chimney inspected annually by a professional. Creosote can build up inside the chimney and pose a fire hazard.

### What to do

- Always use a fire screen to contain sparks.
- Never burn garbage in your fireplace or woodstove.
- Make certain anything combustible is kept a safe distance from the fireplace.
- Never leave a fire unattended, especially in areas used by children or pets.
- Clean out the fireplace ashes when cool and place in a metal container.

## Just in Case

If a fire occurs in your home, a working smoke alarm can save your life.

Make certain smoke alarms are installed on every level of your home and outside every sleeping area. Test your smoke alarm monthly and change the batteries at least once a year.

Everyone in your home should know what to do in the event of a fire. Plan and practice a home escape plan.

Make sure everyone knows at least two ways out of room. Decide upon a place outside of your home where everyone will meet in the event of fire. Make certain everyone understand that once they have left a burning building they should never go back inside. Call 911 from a safe area.

**For More Information Contact:**

Bellevue Fire Department  
Fire Prevention Division  
425-452-6872  
[www.bellevuewa.gov](http://www.bellevuewa.gov)