HOME HEATING FIRE SAFETY

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As temperatures drop, families naturally increase the use of their household heating systems. The Office of the State Fire Marshal's Office wants to remind everyone that heating fires continue to be an issue nationally and in Kansas. In 2008, 937 reported fires in Kansas were due to mobile heating devices.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, the leading factor contributing to home heating fires is having things that burn to close to the heating equipment.

Please use the following guidelines below to help reduce the possibility of a heat related fire in your home.

1.) REMOVE "THINGS THAT BURN"

Most of the time you can prevent a fire incident through good prevention methods. When evaluating your heating equipment observe the placement of "things that can burn" in relation to the equipment. Paper, upholstery, clothing, bedding, etc should be kept at least 3 ft away from any heat source.

2.) FOLLOW PROPER MAINTENANCE

Of all home heating fires reported, at least 25% were due to "Failure to Clean". Proper maintenance and an annual inspection prior to every heating season will help prevent fires.

Additionally, you should follow the manufacturer's instructions for installation, venting, fueling, maintenance and repair.

Some things that you can do yourself include:
- Change your filters regularly
- Fill with fresh fuel every season
- Only add fuel when system is cold
- Burn well-seasoned wood only
- Don't burn trash
- Remove ashes after each use: prevents build-up
- Dispose of ashes in metal container
- Never leave a fire unattended

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HESSTON EMERGENCY SERVICES
HESSTON, KS

When first arriving at a house fire – "it takes your breath away. You think about who's inside, is everyone safe, and then you think about what they have lost"

Safety Lieutenant – Soldier Township FD

3.) AVOID SPACE HEATERS IF POSSIBLE

Between 2003 and 2006 – The number 1 cause of home heating fires by equipment type was space heaters! Subsequently the majority of home heating fire deaths are caused by space heaters.

The best practice is to evaluate your whole house heating system and make the necessary repairs or upgrades to adequately heat the house. If that is not possible, here are some tips when using space heaters:

- Keep a 3ft clearance from "things that burn"
- Turn off when you leave the room or go to bed
- Plug directly into wall outlet with sufficient amps
- Never use an extension cord
- Inspect for cracked, frayed, or broken plugs
- Supervise children and pets to prevent burns