

Protection and Service

Erie Insurance...Protecting You From Loss

Keep the Home Fires Burning Safely

There's nothing like the warmth, comfort, and appeal of a crackling wood fire to ward off winter's chill. The savings to your wallet can be equally appealing. Follow these simple safety steps to help ensure your family's health and safety.

Select the best wood for safety

- Choose hardwood when possible. Never burn trash or treated wood which can emit toxic air pollutants.
- Season wood outdoors for at least six months before burning it. Properly seasoned wood is dark in color, has cracks in the end grain, and sounds hollow when smacked against another piece of wood.
- Do not burn wet or green (unseasoned) logs.
- If you use manufactured logs, choose those made from 100 percent compressed sawdust.
- Store wood outdoors. Stack it neatly off the ground and cover the top.

Survey the area

- Keep all flammable household items, drapes, etc., far away from your wood stove.
- Keep the area around the heating unit and flue clear.

Off to a good start

- When lighting or stoking the fire, open the damper for a few minutes before you open the door to reduce the chance of smoke coming into your home.
- Start fires with clean newspaper and dry kindling. Never start a fire with gasoline, kerosene, charcoal starter, or a propane torch.
- Never leave a fire unattended.

A clean finish

- Let the fire burn down to coals, then rake the coals toward the air inlet and wood stove door.
- Regularly remove ashes from your wood stove into a metal container with a cover. Store the container of ashes outdoors on a cement or brick slab.

Preserve the glow

- Keep a fire extinguisher handy.
- Install and maintain a smoke alarm.
- Have your wood stove, chimney and vents inspected and cleaned by a professional chimney sweep each year.

Combine safety with savings

- Contact a tree service in your area. The service may agree to drop wood at your home to save themselves landfill costs and you the cost of firewood.
- Reduce heating needs by improving your home's insulation. Caulk around windows, doors and pipes to seal air gaps. Add weather-stripping to doors and windows.



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