

FIREPLACE SAFETY

Each year, millions of people enjoy the warmth, comfort of fireplaces. Wood burning and gas fireplaces are designed to safely provide years of comfort, warmth and relaxation. To ensure they can do their job, fireplaces require maintenance and proper operation. Before lighting the first fire of the season, there are a few important fireplace safety tips to remember.

PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE - Chimney upkeep is complicated by the fact that many problems (cracks, faults, and structural damage) are not visible from the outside. To ensure chimney safety, the best course of action is to have a professional chimney sweep, certified by the Chimney Safety Institute of America (CSIA), perform a yearly inspection and clean the chimney as necessary. Chimney sweeps remove debris and obstructions, such as leaves, branches or bird's nests, and look for other problems within the system.

- Have the chimney inspected annually, and cleaned as necessary, by a professional chimney sweep to ensure it's clear of obstructions.
- Have a cap installed at the top of the chimney to avoid the possibility that debris or animals can block the chimney.
- Install both a smoke and carbon monoxide detector. (Make sure the batteries work.)
- Keep a fire extinguisher on hand.
- Make sure the area around the fireplace is clear of furniture, books, newspapers and other potentially flammable materials. Two feet away is a good rule.
- When cleaning the fireplace, store ashes in a non-combustible container with a tightly fitting lid and place the container away from the house.

LIGHTING FIRE

- Clean out ashes from previous fires. Open the damper.
- Use a fireplace grate.
- Use fireplace tools to tend the fire.
- Always close the fire place screen when in use.

Maintenance During A Fire

- Never burn garbage, rolled newspapers, charcoal or plastic in the fireplace.
- Never use gasoline or any liquid accelerant to help start a fire.
- Keep small children and pets away from the fireplace.
- Never leave a fire unattended.
- Don't close the damper until the embers have completely stopped burning.
- Make sure the fire is completely out before going to bed or leaving the house.
- Never burn a Christmas tree in the fireplace.

GAS FIREPLACE SAFETY MAINTENANCE - Gas fireplaces also require routine maintenance and service to ensure their properly working. The best person to perform the service is a specialist who is trained in the maintenance of gas fireplaces. The following maintenance should be checked before using your gas fire place.

- Clean and adjust the glowing embers and logs for best appearance.
- Clean the fan and related air circulation passages.
- Clean the glass.
- Check the batteries in the carbon monoxide detector.
- Ensure the vents are unobstructed and able to do their job.

Many gas fireplaces, stoves and inserts have glass fronts to enhance the beauty of the fire. Glass fronts can become extremely hot during and even long after use. It is important to remember,

touching the hot glass front can lead to serious, irreversible burns. Below is information that will allow you to continue to enjoy the many benefits of your gas fireplace, stove or insert while providing an added level of safety against burns.

- Always supervise children, the aged, infirm or pets near an operating gas fireplace, stove or insert – or one that has recently been turned off.
- Install a switch lock to prevent children from turning on the appliance.
- Make sure family members and guests are aware that the glass panel of a gas fireplace, stove or insert can be very hot.
- Wait for the appliance and glass panel to cool down before allowing anyone to get near it. Cool down can take a long time – an hour or more.
- Be aware that metal surfaces, such as door frames and grilles, may also get hot.
- Always read the owner's manual and follow instructions.