

*As cooler evenings return to the area and the price of home heating fuels at all time highs, many residents will want to enjoy warming up in front of a cozy fireplace or woodstove. To safely use your fireplace, woodstove or kerosene heater, the St. Lawrence County “**Winter Emergency Planning Initiative**” offers these helpful hints and reminders for using and servicing secondary heating appliances prior to cold weather use.*

**Proper installation and maintenance is critical to safe woodstove operation. If you plan to utilize wood as a primary or secondary heating source, speak with sales staff, manufacturer representatives and/or local building code officials to ensure installation is to specification and code!**

#### Wood Selection

To prevent creosote from building up in your fireplace and chimney, use only dry seasoned wood. To be considered seasoned, the wood must be cut and dried for six to twelve months or longer, depending on the type of wood. If you cut your own wood, cut the wood well in advance to allow proper drying time.

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#### Lighting Your Fireplace or Stove

Open the chimney damper. Crumple a small amount of paper and place it in the fire chamber. Place kindling wood and a few pieces of wood over the paper. Using long matches, ignite the paper. Once the wood begins to burn and a good draft has been created, add larger pieces of wood.

Don't remove the left over ash after each use. The ash acts as a heat reflector.

#### **NEVER:**

- **Use flammable liquids to light a fire.**
  - **Store flammable liquids in an area near the stove or fireplace.**
  - **Burn trash, large amounts of paper.**
  - **“Over Fire” so the stove pipe becomes “red hot”.**
  - **Leave the doors open or the screen off, except to fuel the fire.**
  - **Dry clothing closer than three-feet to the stove.**
  - **Leave small children in a room where a wood stove is in use.**
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## **Chimney Fires & Cleaning**

A chimney fire can be a frightening and dangerous experience. A chimney fire may produce loud crackling, or roaring, rumbling noises, and a red hot stove pipe. These fires are caused when CREOSOTE, a normal by-product of burning wood, collects on the inside of the chimney and is ignited.

**These steps can help** limit creosote build up:

- Burn only dry, seasoned wood.
- Avoid slow burning smokey fires.
- Have your chimney inspected and if necessary, cleaned periodically.

**If you have a chimney fire** in spite of your precautions, do these things:

- Call 911 to request the fire department, get everyone out of the house!
- Close the stove or fireplace door to cut-off air to the fire.
- Never throw water on a hot stove.

**A chimney fire may damage parts of the chimney or stove pipe. Be sure to have an inspection made of your entire system before you use it again!**

Chimney cleaning is a fact-of-life for the wood burner. If you burn wood, the formation of some creosote is unavoidable. Your chimney should be cleaned when creosote, at any point, reaches ¼". Chimney Sweeps are available to clean and service you stove pipes and chimneys. You can find them listed in the local Yellow Pages.

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## **Ashes**

Dispose of ashes carefully. Place them in a metal container with a tight-fitting lid. Set the container on a non-combustible surface.

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## **Kerosene Heaters**

**Before you use your kerosene heater**, follow these rules:

- Only use UL approved unit.
- Only use clear K-1 kerosene in a blue-colored kerosene can.
- Refuel the heater outdoors, only after it has cooled. Refuel heater to 90% of the tanks capability only.

When using a kerosene heater, follow the manufacturer's guidelines and keep these rules in mind:

- Use the heater in a well-ventilated area. Locate the heater three-feet from combustible materials such as drapes, furniture or wall covering.
- Never leave kerosene heater burn overnight.
- Keep children away from heater to prevent burns.
- Keep doorways and halls clear. In case of fire, a heater should not block your escape.
- Fiberglass and cotton wicks are not interchangeable. Only use the wick recommended by the manufacturer.