



Winter Safety Indoors



During winter months, safeguard yourself and your family with the following indoors winter safety tips.

Fireplace and Wood-Stove Safety

- Open the damper before lighting the fire, keep it open until the ashes are cool enough to touch. Ensure the fire is completely out before going to bed or leaving the house. Always place the ashes in a metal container and take them outside the house.
- Use a screen in front of the fireplace opening to prevent embers from escaping and igniting carpets. Never leave children alone near a fireplace. Do not store combustible materials such as paper or wood close to the fireplace.
- Ensure chimneys are cleaned and regularly inspected by professionals. Never overload a fireplace or wood-stove. Never use charcoal starter fluids, gasoline or any flammable substance to start fires. Use dry, well-seasoned wood. When using artificial logs, burn only one at a time and follow instructions on the packaging.
- Keep a working fire extinguisher in an accessible location.

Electrical Safety

- Avoid overloading outlets. Plug only one high-wattage appliance into each receptacle outlet at a time.
- Extension cords are a common cause of electrical fires. Different extension cords are designed to carry different levels electrical currents and perform different duties. When using extension cords, ensure that it is rated for the power used by the device it is powering. Avoid connecting multiple extension cords in one string.
- Lights dimming every time an appliance is turned on; sparks appearing when you insert or remove a plug; an electrical cord feeling warm to the touch; frequent blown fuses or broken circuits; or electrical outlets feeling warm to the touch? If you experience any of these problems, it is important to have your electrical system inspected by a professional electrician.
- Heating appliances such as space heaters should not have anything combustible close-by and need at least three feet of space around them. Inspect the electrical cord attached.
- Never use generators indoors and only connect appliances by using heavy-duty outdoor-ready cords.

Keeping your Home Safe

- If you will be away from your home for an extended period of time, do not advertise that you are away. Have a friend or neighbour check-in on your home regularly, picking up mail, newspapers, and clearing snow from driveways and sidewalks. Install timers on lights to make your home look lived in.
- Ensure access points are well-lit. Exterior motion-sensor lights can help deter criminals. Minimize hiding spots by cutting back shrubs and ensuring the entrance to the home is visible from the street.
- Be alert to strangers loitering in the street. If you do not recognize them or they are acting suspiciously, call the police.
- Do not allow strangers into your home. Do not open the door to people you do not know, no matter how well-dressed they are or how kind they appear to be. If they claim to be representing a company you have business with, call and confirm with the company before allowing them into your home.

Carbon Monoxide Awareness

- Carbon monoxide (CO) is a leading cause of fatal poisonings. CO is colorless, odorless and tasteless, making it almost impossible to detect.
- The best way to recognize the presence of this deadly gas to have install a carbon monoxide detector near bedroom areas on each floor. Remember to test the detector regularly.
- Proper venting of fuel-burning appliances to the outside is also essential to prevent collection of carbon monoxide gas inside buildings. Never insulate or try to seal up a drafty hood, wind cap or exhaust vent on any natural gas appliance, e.g. furnace, water heater, range, dryer, space heater or fireplace. Do not store anything close to these appliances that could restrict air circulation.
- Do a visual inspection of the equipment to look for signs of problems, such as soot on a fireplace face, water collecting near a burner or rusted venting. Periodically check vent pipes between gas appliances and the chimney for corrosion or rust. Appliances that use natural gas should show a clear blue flame—a yellow or orange flame may indicate a problem. If you suspect a problem, call a qualified professional.
- Ensure a source of fresh air is available, i.e. an open window or flue, when operating a wood-burning fireplace or wood-stove.

Keep an Emergency Kit

- Winter weather is unpredictable and can result in hazards such as floods, power outages, severe storms that can leave you stranded. Stock up on emergency supplies, stowing them at home, at work, in your car.
- Prepare in advance for severe winter weather emergencies. If an emergency happens in your community, it may take emergency workers some time to reach you. You should be prepared to take care of yourself and your family for a minimum of 72 hours. Visit www.GetPrepared.gc.ca to learn about preparing yourself and your family for weather related emergencies and natural disasters.