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OSFM Urges Immediate Fire Safety Action Following Deadly Fires
Since Friday, February 14 there have been 8 deadly fires claiming the lives 10 people in Illinois

Springfield, Ill- The OSFM is urging Illinois residents to review and practice their fire escape plans while testing and inspection smoke alarms following a wave of recent deadly home fires. Sadly, since Friday, February 14, there have been 8 deadly fires claiming the lives of 10 people in Illinois. So far in 2025, Illinois has seen 16 fatal fires resulting in 19 fire related fatalities.

“During the winter months we see an increase in home fires caused by heating deceives or malfunctioning heating equipment,” **said Illinois State Fire Marshal James A. Rivera.** “This is why it is so important for people to test and inspect all smoke alarms monthly, review and practice their fire escape plans, and follow manufactures instructions on all home heating devices.”

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), heating equipment is one of the leading causes of home fire deaths. Fire departments responded to an estimated average of 44,210 fires involving heating equipment per year from 2016-2020, accounting for 13% of all reported home fires during this time, and these fires resulted in annual losses of 480 civilian deaths. Space heaters were the type of heating equipment responsible for the largest shares of losses in home heating equipment fires, accounting for one-third of the fires, but nearly nine out of ten deaths and four out of five of the injuries in home fires caused by heating equipment. Half of the home heating fire deaths were caused by having heating equipment too close to things that can burn, such as upholstered furniture, clothing mattresses or bedding. Nearly half of all home heating fires occurred in December, January, and February.

Here are some other tips to keep in mind when it comes to winter heating safety:

- Have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year by a qualified professional and change furnace filters frequently.
- Have a qualified professional install stationary space heating equipment, water heaters, or central heating equipment according to the local codes and manufacturers’ instructions.
- Keep interior and exterior air vents clear of blockages or obstructions.
- Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from heating equipment, like a furnace, fireplace, wood stove, or portable space heater.
- Purchase units with an automatic shutoff in case the unit tips over or you forget to shut it off.

- Make sure the fireplace has a sturdy screen to stop sparks from flying into the room. Ashes should be cool before being placed into a metal container. Keep the container a safe distance away from your home.
- Create a three-foot “kid-free zone” around open fires and space heaters.
- Test smoke and CO alarms at least once a month and be familiar with the sounds they make.
- Never use an oven or range to heat your home.
- Remember to turn off portable or space heaters when leaving the room or going to bed.
- Install carbon monoxide and smoke detectors on each floor of your home and within 15 feet of each sleeping area.
- CO detectors have a limited life span; check the manufacturer’s instructions for information on replacement.

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