

THE RISK OBSERVER

Safety Information for Residents

FIREPLACE SAFETY

Curling up in front of a warm fireplace is one of the many joys of the fall and winter seasons. Every type of fireplace, whether wood-burning, gas, or electric, poses a potential danger to families.

The National Fire Protection Association estimates that there will be thousands house fires this year started by fireplaces. Major causes of these fires include overloading the fire, damage to the fireplace such as missing bricks, obstructed flues, ignition of nearby combustibles, and flying sparks.

- Make sure the Chimney Flue is open before starting a fire, and remains open until fire has stopped smoldering 100%. All fireplaces are equipped with a Chimney Flue. It's the valve that allows the smoke from the fireplace to exit safely. Carbon Monoxide can build up if this is not done.
- Only burn seasoned, dry, hardwood that has been cut specifically for fireplace use (never burn paper, scrap lumber, charcoal, or anything other than firewood).
- Remove all decorative items, newspapers, magazines, rugs, etc. near the fireplace and keep glass or screen mesh doors closed at all times while in use.
- Never wear loose clothing while working with the fireplace.
- Never use any flammable liquids like kerosene, gasoline, or lighter fluid to assist in creating the fire. Use long-stemmed matches.
- Teach children to stay back from the fireplace.
- Never leave a fire unattended, even while coals are still smoldering.
- Keep a fire extinguisher readily available.

WARNING: Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless, poisonous gas. It is produced by the incomplete burning of solid, liquid, and gaseous fuels, and has the potential to cause death.

CLEANING YOUR FIREPLACE

- Wait until all coals and embers have fully completed the smoldering process.
- Never use paper or plastic bags to store ashes or fireplace remains.
- A "coal hod" or metal bucket designed to store ashes and fireplace remains must be used.
- Never set ashes or fireplace remains on your deck, patio, or breezeway.

Contact the property's management if you have any questions or concerns about the safe operation of your fireplace.