December, January, and February are the leading months for US home fires and home fire deaths. On average, more than one-third of home fire deaths in the US occur during the winter months. Are you ready? The tips in this issue of “Safety Lines” will help you make your home WINTER FIRE SAFE!

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SPACE HEATERS

Heating equipment, especially portable and space heaters, require careful use and proper maintenance. Follow these tips to prevent fire and burn-related injuries over the winter months:

- Place space heaters at least three feet away from anything that could burn—including furniture, curtains, people, and pets.
- There should always be an adult in the room when a space heater is on. Turn off space heaters before leaving a room or going to sleep.
- Supervise children and pets at all times when a space heater is in use.
- Keep space heaters clean and well maintained.

When shoveling snow, make sure your house number is visible and can be seen from the street—page 3.

Written and researched by Jessica Banks, BPN Prevention Education Director

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GLASS-FRONTED FIREPLACE SAFETY

When we think about the dangers of fireplaces, most of us probably think about the immediate danger of flame and sparks from the fire. There is another hidden danger, especially when it comes to gas fireplaces—GLASS FIREPLACE DOORS.

Toddlers are naturally attracted to the flames and these little ones move so quickly that there may not be time for you, as a parent, to stop them before they are in harm’s way! **Burns can happen in an instant!**

Glass fireplace doors can heat to almost 500 degrees in a matter of minutes and **can stay hot enough to burn a child for up to 45 minutes after they have been turned off!**

They have been compared to an oven without a door and become so hot that skin can, and will, actually adhere to the glass.

Please be aware of this danger, not just at home but when visiting someone else’s home that has a fireplace with a glass door!

Dryer Fires

Take these precautions to prevent a dryer fire in your home:

- Clean the lint screen/filter before or after drying each load of clothes. The leading cause of dryer fires is failure to clean them.
- Clean the dryer vent and exhaust duct once a year or more often if you notice that it is taking longer than normal for clothes to dry.
- Check outside while the dryer is running to make sure air is escaping. If not, it may be blocked. Make sure it does not become covered with snow during the winter.
- Clean behind the dryer where lint can build up.
- Take special care when drying clothes that have been soiled with volatile chemicals. Hang to dry, or use the coolest drying cycle and remove immediately when dry!
- Turn the dryer off if you leave home or before you go to bed.
CARBON MONOXIDE

What is Carbon Monoxide?
Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a colorless, tasteless, and odorless gas that can kill a person in minutes if it goes undetected. Fuel such as gas, oil, kerosene, wood, or charcoal produces CO when burning. Hundreds of people die each year from malfunctioning or improperly used fuel-burning appliances.

What are the symptoms of CO poisoning?
Symptoms of CO poisoning include, but are not limited to, severe headaches, dizziness, light-headedness, nausea, or shortness of breath.

Do I need a carbon monoxide detector in my house?
Carbon monoxide is a silent killer, and having carbon monoxide detectors is crucial, especially in homes that have fossil-fuel burning heaters or appliances, fireplaces, or an attached garage.

Where should I install the detectors?
At the very least, you should have one near the sleeping area of your home. Additional detectors on every level and in every bedroom provide even more protection. You should remember not to install carbon monoxide detectors directly above or beside fuel-burning appliances, as appliances may emit a small amount of carbon monoxide upon start-up. A detector should not be placed within fifteen feet of heating or cooking appliances or in or near very humid areas such as bathrooms.

What do I do if my CO detector’s alarm sounds or if I suspect that my family is suffering from Carbon Monoxide poisoning?
Get the victim(s) into fresh air immediately. If you cannot get the people out of the house, then open all windows and doors. Any combustion appliances should be turned off. Take those who were subjected to carbon monoxide to a hospital emergency room as quickly as possible. A simple blood test will be able to determine if carbon monoxide poisoning has occurred.

WINTER STORM SAFETY

Snow is fun for our little ones, but it can also create dangerous situations! As winter approaches, it’s important to prepare for the problems that winter storms can cause and keep our families safe!

- When shoveling snow, make sure your house number is visible and can be seen from the street. Fire fighters need to know where you live to be able to help in an emergency!
- Have flashlights ready and know where they are in case the power goes out. Have extra batteries nearby too. Never use candles!
- Only use generators outdoors. Never run a generator in your garage and keep them away from windows and doors.
- Keep snow clear from dryer and heating vents.
- Stay away from downed wires, and report them to authorities.
- Test your smoke alarms once a month.
- Plan and practice your home escape! Make sure you have two ways out of every room and a meeting place outdoors.
Kids Corner

Winter Storm Survival Kit

Assembling a “Winter Storm Survival Kit” can be made into a fun scavenger hunt for you and your older child. Search the home for the following items, and keep them together in a place that will be easily accessible in the event of a power outage:

- Flashlights/battery-operated lanterns and extra batteries
- A battery-powered radio (to receive emergency updates)
- Extra food and bottled water (food not requiring refrigeration or cooking is best)
- Extra medicine
- Extra baby supplies
- Extra pet supplies
- A first aid kit
- Blankets
- Manual can opener
- Board games
- Craft projects & other entertainment items

Also make sure you have:

- Plenty of heating fuel or alternative heat source
- Cash (in the event of a wide-spread power outage, ATMs will not be available.)
- A full tank of fuel in your car
- Fully charge your cell phone, portable DVD players, laptops, etc.

“SNOWY POKEY”
(to the tune of: Hokey Pokey)

“You put your right mitten in,
You take your right mitten out,
You put your right mitten in and you shake it all about.
You do the Snowey Pokey and you turn yourself around.
That’s what it’s all about.”

Additional verses:
*left mitten
*your scarf
*your boots
*your hat
*your snowself