

FIRE MARSHAL TOWN OF NEW CANAAN



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Fireplace Safety/Don't be an Ash!

As the weather gets cooler we all think "this is a great night for a fire in the fire place!". But the Fire Department has already responded to two homes for chimney flues that were not properly opened before the fire was started somewhat detracting from the envisioned "nice evening". Therefore, following is a list of safety pointers to insure that we all have a safe and enjoyable night with our fireplace:



- Never burn charcoal or use a hibachi in your fireplace. Both produce deadly carbon monoxide.
- Protect against sparks by enclosing a fireplace's opening with glass doors or a sturdy screen.
- Don't forget to make sure the damper is open and wait at least 24 hrs. before closing – deadly carbon monoxide could build up.
- Ashes can remain hot for several *days* after a fire has burned – If you can't wait always use a noncombustible container with a lid to remove ashes and never place in household garbage.
- Never use gasoline, kerosene or lighter fluid to start a fire. Burn only dry, seasoned hardwood. For extra safety, light fires with long-stemmed matches.
- Never burn pressure treated lumber as the fumes are extremely toxic.
- If using "Duraflame" type logs strictly follow the use and care instructions from the manufacturer.
- Keep flammables such as newspapers, magazines, rugs and carpeting well away from the fireplace.
- Remove holiday decorations from the fireplace and mantle before building a fire to avoid having the decorations ignite.
- Never leave a fire unattended.

- In new construction make sure the make-up air vent is open – newer tight construction can cause a problem with “air starvation” for your fireplace.
- Gas fireplaces must be used in strict compliance with manufacturers operating instructions.

For questions regarding fireplace safety or any other fire safety topics please contact the New Canaan Fire Marshal’s Office at 594-3030.