

NEWS RELEASE

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November 3, 2015

Now is the time to check home heating equipment

PROSPER (November 3, 2015) Never ones to go by strict calendar days, people in this part of North Texas will customarily wait until mid- to late- November to start thinking about winter, says Fire Marshal Bryan Ausenbaugh.

“In truth, though, we should all start the winterizing process now,” he said. “Getting things ready while the temperatures are not bone-chilling cold is smart. We may not start thinking about turning on our heating equipment, but we should start thinking about getting it ready.”

In the US, improperly functioning heating equipment is a leading cause of home fire deaths. And, half of all home heating equipment fires are reported during the months of December, January, and February.

“Everyone can take some relatively simple steps to prevent most heating-related fires from happening,” he said.

- Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from heating equipment, like the furnace, fireplace, wood stove, or portable space heater.
- Have a three-foot “kid-free zone” around open fires and space heaters.
- Never use your oven, gas range or cooktop to heat your home.
- Have a qualified professional install stationary space heating equipment, water heaters or central heating equipment according to the local codes and manufacturer’s instructions.
- Have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year by a qualified professional.
- Remember to turn portable heaters off when leaving the room or going to bed.
- Always use the right kind of fuel, specified by the manufacturer, for fuel burning space heaters.
- Make sure the fireplace has a sturdy screen to stop sparks from flying into the room. Ashes should be cool before putting them in a metal container. Keep the container a safe distance away from your home.
- Test smoke alarms monthly.

“These simple steps from the National Fire Prevention Association are effective in helping homeowners stay safe this winter,” he said.

Wood burning stoves are becoming more common in homes, and many are sold to do-it-yourselfers. When installing a wood burning stove, residents must follow manufacturer’s instructions carefully, or have a professional do the installation.

“All fuel-burning equipment should be vented to the outside to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning,” said Ausenbaugh. “If your home does not have at least one carbon monoxide alarm, install and maintain as many as necessary.”

And, above all, if the distinctive smell of gas is detected coming from gas heaters, it should never be ignited. In those cases, residents should leave the home immediately and call the fire department or the gas company.

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ABOUT THE TOWN OF PROSPER – The Town of Prosper is a fast-growing suburb with small town charm, located 30 miles north of Dallas at the crossroads of U.S. 380, Preston Road and the Dallas North Tollway in Collin and Denton Counties. Prosper sits on 27 square miles and is home to more than 15,000 people. A home-rule municipality, governed by a council-manager form of government, the town has full-time fire and police departments, including its own dispatch service. As the Town grows to its projected build-out population of 70,000 residents, Prosper’s vision is to remain a “Place Where Everyone Matters.”