

Heating with Woodstoves

With the cost of home heating fuel expected to reach record highs this winter, more people will be turning to alternatives to save money. Fireplaces and woodstoves are predicted to make a big resurgence. With the increase in woodstove use comes a corresponding increase in risk of home fires. Here are a few tips for safer woodstove use.

- If you recently bought a new stove or a used stove, it is a good idea to have the local fire department inspect its installation. This is especially true if the stove was not installed by an experienced professional.
- Make sure your chimney is clean and in good condition before using the stove.
- Make frequent checks of your stovepipe and chimney for creosote buildup; clean when the buildup is one-quarter inch.
- Never use a flammable liquid to start a fire and make sure no flammable liquids are in the same room when you are using your stove.
- Use only properly cured, seasoned firewood.
- Use a metal container with a tight-fitting lid for ash disposal; dispose of ashes after they have cooled. Wear heavy-duty protective gloves when handling ashes and coals.
- Purchase a fire-retardant hearth rug. Home CO Detectors Are Mandatory in MA
Odorless, tasteless, invisible carbon monoxide (CO) is called the invisible killer. Build-ups resulting from incomplete combustion of any flame-fueled (i.e., not electric) device combined with poor ventilation can produce tragic results especially at night when every one in the home is asleep.

You are required by Massachusetts law to install working CO detectors. In fact, owners are not permitted to sell a home without them. There are battery-operated and hard-wired CO detectors on the market plus combination smoke-CO alarms. Detectors should be placed within 10 feet of every bedroom, and in every habitable level of your home. Your local fire department can advise you on the proper locations and positioning for your detectors.

For your online copy of the Consumer's Guide to Massachusetts Requirements for Carbon Monoxide Alarms go to www.mass.gov/dfs homepage and click on Carbon Monoxide Detectors in RELATED LINKS.