

# Winter Safety Tips



During these winter months, carbon monoxide poisonings increase by 10% as more people use home heating systems and space heaters more frequently. In an effort to raise awareness about the dangers posed as temperatures plummet, consider these tips during this season to help keep you and your loved ones safe:

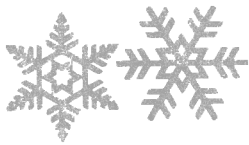
1. **Test your carbon monoxide (CO) and smoke alarms.** Be sure to test them at least once a month. Carbon monoxide detectors should be installed on every level of the building or home. Smoke alarms should also be replaced every 10 years of installation.



2. **Plug portable space heaters directly into an outlet, rather than an extension cord.** Be sure to place at least three feet from anything that can burn, including bedding, papers, and even people. Make sure they also have automatic shut-off, or leave notes to help you remember to turn it off when you leave or go to bed.

3. **Have your furnace, chimney, and vents cleaned and inspected every year.** Creosote buildup is a leading cause for chimney fires and the furnace should be maintained every year. Prevent potential incidents by having a skilled professional examine it. Also, be sure to have a metal container available to you to dispose of any cooled ash, and store at least 10 feet away from your home or building.





4. ***If you have a portable generator, keep outside, away from windows, and as far away from your home as possible.*** The exhaust from the generator produces carbon monoxide and having an open window may not be enough to properly ventilate an area and prevent CO buildup. Give the generator 3 to 4 feet of clear space on all sides and above it. Be aware of symptoms of CO poisoning —dizziness, headaches, tiredness, and nausea — and get to fresh air quickly if you think you have been exposed.

5. ***Plan and practice a home or work escape plan in the event of an emergency.*** Make sure to clearly designate exit route assignments that do not expose anyone to potential danger. Include locations of exits, assembly points, and equipment, such as a fire extinguisher or first aid kit.

6. ***Make sure your clothes dryer exhaust tube and vent, are clear.*** Lint is very flammable and can build up in the exhaust tube and clog the vent opening. If it gets too hot, it can catch on fire. You, or a professional, should clean your dryer hose and around it once a year, and inspect the vent and hose for blockages at least every 6 months.

