

Winter safety for your home

Freezing temperatures, ice, snow and wind can all cause severe damage to your home and property, especially if you are not ready for them. We have all seen the damage that winter weather can do to a house. This information can help you enjoy a safe and loss-free winter.

The three most common causes of damage to a home in winter are:

- Improperly used or maintained heating systems
- Frozen pipes
- Build-up of ice and snow on your roof

The proper precautions now and regular care throughout the winter should help you avoid these winter perils.

Safer Home Heating

December, January and February are the leading months for U.S. home fires and home fire deaths. On average, more than one-third of home fire deaths in the United States occur during the winter months.

The National Fire Protection Association's latest report on U.S. home heating fire patterns indicates that heating equipment fires are the second leading causes of fire deaths in American homes and the biggest fire culprit December through January.

Home heating fire problems in America are largely ones of human error, particularly with the misuse of portable heaters, fireplaces and woodstoves. The important elements of home heating safety have to do with correct installation, maintenance, fueling and operation of portable and space heaters, as well as safely arranging household items around them.

According to NFPA the major causes of U.S. home heating fires are:

- Lack of regular cleaning of chimneys in fireplaces and woodstoves
- Placing things that can burn too close to space and portable heaters
- Flaws in design, installation or use
- Fueling errors involving liquid or gas-fueled heaters
- Leaving portable or space heaters unattended.

When purchasing new heating equipment, NFPA advises selecting equipment that bears the mark of an independent testing laboratory. Install and maintain heating equipment correctly.