

Fire Department Offers Safety Tips During Winter Weather

The Bristol Tennessee Fire Department is asking residents to remember the importance of practicing fire safety while attempting to keep warm.

Cold weather preparations include stocking up on household supplies as conditions may cause families to be homebound for a few days. Remember that fresh batteries for smoke alarms and flashlights should also be on hand. Every family should have emergency supplies, as well as, an emergency plan for unexpected interruptions of daily routines.

A fully charged cell phone battery should be maintained in case of a power outage and emergency calls must be made. Also, if you take any medication, be sure to have an emergency supply to last for a few days. The fire department also offers safety tips for preventing fires and fire related injuries during the winter season:

- Make sure space heaters are at least 3 feet away from anything that can burn
- Don't fuel kerosene heaters while hot; make sure they are cool to the touch before fueling
- Crack a window for fresh air flow to prevent carbon monoxide build up when using a kerosene heater
- When refueling an oil or kerosene unit, avoid overfilling. Avoid using cold fuel for it may expand in the tank as it warms up
- Refueling should be done outside the home
- Keep children away from space heaters
- Do not leave candles unattended
- Before going to sleep, be sure your fireplace fire is out. Never close your damper with hot ashes in the fireplace. A closed damper will help the fire to heat up again and will force toxic carbon monoxide into the house.
- Never discard hot ashes inside or near the home. Place them in a metal container outside and well away from the house.
- If you use an electrical heater be sure to not overload the circuit.
- Never try to thaw frozen water pipes with a blow torch or other open flame
- If windows are used as emergency exits in your home, practice using them in the event fire should strike.

Remember another common wintertime problem is broken hips, especially among the elderly, that can occur from a fall because of the wet and slippery conditions. To help prevent these falls we should wear shoes with non-skid soles, stay only on sidewalks or areas that have been cleared of snow and ice, use handrails if available, and stay in after dark in these hazardous weather conditions.

For more information contact Asst. Fire Chief Spurgeon at jspurgeon@bristoltn.org or call 423-989-5701.