

Fireplace safety tips

Fireplaces are a treat to have in the colder months, but they do need some maintenance to keep them safe and prevent fire and smoke from spreading to other areas of your home. Read on for our top 10 tips on keeping your fireplace safe.

1. Open damper before lighting the fire. Don't close it until the ashes have cooled completely.
2. Place cooled ashes in a metal container stored outside the house.
3. Store paper, wood and other flammable materials well away from the fireplace.
4. Use a screen to keep embers contained.
5. Only use small amounts of dry, well-seasoned wood. Never use starter fluids or other fuel.
6. Have chimneys professionally cleaned and serviced every year to prevent tar and creosote buildup. Chimneys may require more frequent servicing in instances of high use. Gas fireplaces should also be serviced annually by a qualified service technician.
7. Have smoke and carbon monoxide detectors installed and functioning properly before starting a fire in your woodstove or fireplace.
8. Avoid running your fireplace at the same time as other appliances that vent to the outside to avoid carbon monoxide buildup. This includes clothes dryers or central vacuum systems, or when you have your kitchen range hood or bathroom vents switched on. Running all of these appliances at once overtaxes the venting system so that some carbon monoxide stays trapped in the home.
9. Check for potential equipment issues such as excessive soot, rusted vent pipes or water pooling near burners.
10. For gas fireplaces, make sure the flame is clear blue. If it's yellow or orange, call a professional technician for service.