



Midlothian Fire Department – Fire Prevention Bureau

Stephen Hotwagner

Fire Chief

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Fire Prevention Officer

January Fire Safety / Information

WINTER FIRE and HEALTH SAFETY TIPS

- Keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet from any heat source like fireplaces, wood stoves, radiators or space heaters.
- Have a qualified professional clean and inspect your chimney and vents every year.
- Often called the invisible killer, carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless gas created when fuels such as gasoline, wood, coal, propane, etc. do not burn completely. In the home, heating and cooking equipment that burn fuel are potential sources of CO. Carbon monoxide incidents are more common during the winter months, and in residential properties.
- Most of the U.S. is at risk for winter storms, which can cause dangerous and sometimes life-threatening conditions. Blinding wind-driven snow, extreme cold, icy road conditions, downed trees and power lines can all wreak havoc on our daily schedules. Home fires occur more in the winter than in any other season, and heating equipment is involved in one of every six reported home fires, and one in every five home fire deaths.

Shovel Fire Hydrants

- When shoveling a fire hydrant it is important to shovel not only the access to the hydrant from the roadway, but also 3-feet around the fire hydrant. Remember the "3 rules for 3 feet"
- If you have a hydrant on your property, we ask that you shovel your hydrant to help us out. If you are unable to shovel your hydrant due to health reasons, etc., attempt to educate your neighbors ask them for assistance. If you rent, please seek permission from your landlord/property owner. If you have a neighbor who is elderly or who otherwise cannot shovel a fire hydrant, please offer to help shovel the hydrant on their property. In any event, we would like to stress, please seek permission to access another's property.
- We would also like to stress, please ONLY shovel your hydrant if the conditions are safe to do so, you are well visible and not in danger of being struck when working near the roadway, and you are physically able to do so. You should NEVER put your safety in jeopardy when shoveling the hydrants.



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Prepare Your Vehicle

- Service the radiator and maintain antifreeze level.
- Check your tires' tread or, if necessary, replace tires with all-weather or snow tires.
- Keep the gas tank full to avoid ice in the tank and fuel lines.
- Use a wintertime formula in your windshield washer.
- Prepare a winter emergency kit to keep in your car in case you become stranded. The kit should include:
 - Cell phone, portable charger, and extra batteries.
 - Items to stay warm, such as extra hats, coats, mittens, blankets, or sleeping bags.
 - Food and water.
 - Booster cables, flares, tire pump, and a bag of sand or cat litter (for traction).
 - Compass and maps.
 - Flashlight, battery-powered radio, and extra batteries.
 - First-aid kit; and
 - Plastic bags (for sanitation).



If you are using a portable heater:

- Make sure the heater has an automatic shut-off so if it tips over, it shuts off.
- Keep anything that can burn such bedding, clothing and curtains at least 3 feet from the heater.
- Plug portable heaters directly into wall outlets. Never use an extension cord or power strip.
- Turn heaters off when you go to bed or leave the room.



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If you are using a fireplace:

- Keep a glass or metal screen in front of the fireplace to prevent embers or sparks from jumping out and starting a fire.
- Do not burn paper in your fireplace.
- Before you go to sleep or leave your home put the fire out completely.
- Put ashes in a metal container with a lid. Store the container outside at least 3 feet from your home.

If you are using a wood stove:

- Have your chimney inspected and cleaned each year by a professional.
- Keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet from the stove.
- Do not burn paper in your wood stove.
- Before you go to sleep or leave your home, put the fire out completely.

As always be safe, stay healthy and enjoy the holiday season! Best wishes!

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