



NEWS

R E L E A S E

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HUDGENS OFFERS FIREPLACE SAFETY TIPS

Atlanta – Prompted by the recent tragedy in Stamford, Connecticut, Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner Ralph T. Hudgens wants to remind Georgians of some safety tips for fireplaces to help keep their homes safe this winter.

“Fireplaces are great for keeping warm, but a few precautions should always be taken when using them,” Hudgens said. “Therefore, when using one, please also keep these things in mind:”

- Always use well seasoned wood in the fireplace with a fire screen or firebox doors. Wood that has not been well seasoned leaves additional creosote in the chimney. Unseasoned wood pops more due to the additional water vapor it contains causing embers to be expelled from the fire box resulting in a potential fire hazard.
- Dispose of ashes in a metal container with a lid. The ash container should be placed at least three feet away from the dwelling on a non-combustible surface. Extra precaution should be taken on a windy day so as to prevent the ash container from being knocked or blown over.
- Make sure to have your chimney and fireplace inspected annually for cracks and faults. The best cleaning program is to have a professional chimney sweep clean it since creosote buildup varies greatly due to such things as frequency of usage, type of fires, and wood variety.
- Do not burn coal in a fireplace or a wood stove designed to burn wood; coal burns much hotter than wood and can cause damage to the fire box enclosure and flue potentially resulting in failures in the material itself and exposing the surrounding structure to heat and fire.
- Wood and other combustible materials should not be stored on the hearth near the fireplace, as it could ignite and cause a fire to spread quickly in a home.
- As always, make sure that you have working smoke alarms with fresh batteries. Carbon monoxide detectors are also recommended and should be installed per the manufacturer’s instructions.

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