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# CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

## California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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### **CAL FIRE Warns of Home Heating Danger as Winter Storm Approaches**

**Sacramento** - As a major winter storm prepares to hit California, CAL FIRE is reminding residents to take steps to heat their homes safely. While the cooler weather and rain is a welcomed event during a time of severe drought in California, it also means that many will need to turn on home heating sources to keep warm indoors. CAL FIRE is encouraging everyone to be safe with heating their homes, as this is the time of year fire departments across the nation see an increase in home fires due to dangerous heating equipment or unsafe practices.

Improper use or poorly maintained heating equipment is one of the leading causes of home fires and home fire deaths across the country. Half of home heating equipment fires are reported during the months of December, January and February. "Home fires caused by negligent use of heating equipment is easily preventable," states State Fire Marshal Tonya Hoover, CAL FIRE-Office of the State Fire Marshal. "Taking the time to check your heating equipment and maintaining it correctly could make the difference in protecting your home, but most importantly your life. If the heat is provided using fossil fuels, there should be a working carbon monoxide alarm to help alert residents if a malfunction in their heating equipment occurs. And as always, make sure you have working smoke alarms throughout the home."

With just these few simple safety steps, you can prevent most heating-related fires from happening:

- Every home should have a working carbon monoxide (CO) alarm to avoid the risk of CO poisoning
- Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from heating equipment, like the furnace, fireplace, wood stove or portable space heater.
- Have a three-foot "kid-free zone" around open fires and space heaters.
- Never use your oven to heat your home.
- Have a qualified professional install stationary space heating equipment, water heaters or central heating equipment according to the local codes and manufacturer's instructions.
- Have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year by a qualified professional.
- Remember to turn portable heaters off when leaving the room or going to bed.

To learn more about the dangers of carbon monoxide, click [here](#) to watch a short, informative video. For more information on safe home heating visit the CAL FIRE website at [www.fire.ca.gov](http://www.fire.ca.gov).