



**For Immediate Release:
ATTENTION: NEWSROOMS**

Heating Equipment – Time for a Checkup!

North Bay (October 26, 2009) Now that temperatures are beginning to fall, families are preparing their homes for winter. North Bay Fire & Emergency Services encourages you to give your furnace, fireplace or woodstove a checkup to ensure that they operate safely and efficiently. North Bay Fire Chief Grant Love warns that lack of maintenance is the number one contributor to chimney fires due to the build-up of creosote, a highly flammable waste product of combustion. "Chimneys should be cleaned at least once a year." said Chief Love. North Bay Fire and Emergency Services encourages residents to practice the following fire safety tips to keep home fires burning safely.

Keep fireplaces and wood stoves clean

- Have your chimney or wood stove inspected and cleaned annually by a certified chimney specialist (WETT Certified).
- Clear the area around the hearth of debris, decorations and flammable materials.
- Always use a metal mesh screen with fireplaces.
- Install stovepipe thermometers to help monitor flue temperatures.
- Keep air inlets on wood stoves open, and never restrict air supply to fireplaces to prevent creosote build-up that could lead to a chimney fire.
- Use fire resistant materials on walls around wood stoves.

Safely burn fuels

- Never use flammable liquids to start a fire.
- Use only dry seasoned hardwood. Soft, moist wood accelerates creosote build-up.
- Build small fires that burn completely and produce less smoke.
- Never burn cardboard boxes, trash or debris in your fireplace or wood stove.
- When building a fire, place logs at the rear of the fireplace on an adequate supporting grate.
- Dispose of ashes in a metal container outside your home.

Protect the outside of your home

- Cover the chimney with a mesh screen spark arrester.
- Remove branches hanging above the chimney, flues or vents.

Heating appliances should also be cleaned and inspected annually to prevent fires and deadly carbon monoxide gas from entering your home. Contact a qualified service technician to clean and inspect your furnace. **Remember, if you have a fuel burning appliance and/or an attached garage it's the law to install a carbon monoxide alarm.**

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For more information contact:

Sheri Korn, Public Education/Fire Prevention Officer 474-0626 ext. 4806