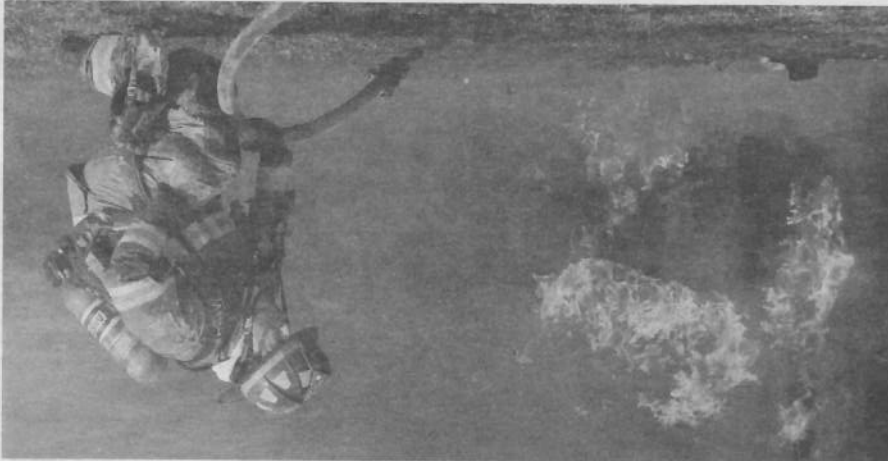


Tips to avoid winter home fires



Scott Anderson

La Salle firefighter Mitch Water lifts a hose in the frigid cold to fight a fully engulfed house fire in the 800 block of Bucklin Street on Jan. 23 in La Salle.

NFPA. Plug only one heat-producing tool (like a space heater) into a wall outlet at a time.

You should always ensure your carbon monoxide and smoke detectors in your home are working. The NFPA recommends checking carbon monoxide detectors once a month.

Tips for fireplaces and candles

Anytime there's a live flame, extra vigilance is warranted.

Chimneys should be inspected and cleaned before you start up the fireplace for the season. Store cooled ashes in a tightly covered metal container. Keep that container outside at all times, at least 10 feet away from your home.

Even things like candles should be monitored closely, according to the NFPA.

Anything flammable, including in-ens, bedding, blankets, furniture, should be at least 3 feet away from any heat source like fireplaces, wood stoves, radiators or space heaters.

For more tips, visit nfpa.org.

Space heaters, fireplaces, frozen pipes: Do's and don'ts for fire safety in cold months

By KELSEY RETTKE

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It might be freezing outside, but that doesn't mean your home can't catch fire if you're not careful this winter.

In fact, fires trend up in the winter months because of it, experts say. That's because homes are using more equipment - electric and gas - to keep warm.

December, January and February are the peak months for fires caused by heated elements. Equipment like space heaters, fireplaces and home fire

leading cause of home fires and home fire injuries, and the third-leading cause of home fire deaths, according to the National Fire Prevention Association.

Here are some tips from the NFPA, Dekalb Fire Chief Lukie Howieson and other experts to ensure your home is safe and fireproof in the cold months:

Beware supplemental heat sources

Not so much that you use them, but where you plug them in.

Space heaters should be plugged directly into a wall outlet, not an extension cord or power strip. And keep them away from flammable materials like curtains and beds - things that will catch more quickly if overheated.

It might be tempting, but using your oven to heat your home is also ill-advised.

What's the safest way to keep my pipes from freezing? (Or if I have to thaw them out?)

Another common cause of winter fires is improperly thawing frozen pipes.

It's easier to prevent them than thaw

LOCAL NEWS BRIEF

Putnam Library to screen 'Mr. Civil Rights' on Feb. 12

The Putnam County Public Library Districts Condit Branch will screen "Mr. Civil Rights: Thurgood Marshall and the NAACP" at 4 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 12.

This documentary highlights the extraordinary life and legacy of Thurgood Marshall. As a pioneering civil rights attorney, Marshall achieved a historic victory in *Brown v. Board of*

Education (1954), ending legal segregation in public schools and reshaping the course of American history.

For two decades - through the Great Depression and World War II - Marshall traveled throughout the Jim Crow South, courageously challenging segregation case by case. Despite threats, violence and countless barriers, he secured more Supreme Court victories than any lawyer in U.S. history. His

groundbreaking work laid the foundation for the Civil Rights Movement and helped pave the way for future leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks. Mr. Civil Rights is a 57-minute documentary, not rated, and made available through Kanopy.

This program is free and open to the public. For more information, call 815-339-2038 or visit the library at 105 N. Center St., Putnam.

- Tom Collins