



Heating Your Home

In 2009, heating equipment was involved in an estimated 58,900 reported home structure fires, 480 civilian deaths, 1,520 civilian injuries, and \$1.1 billion in direct property damage. Fires, injuries, and damages were all lower than in 2008 (and deaths were virtually unchanged) and fit into a largely level trend over the past few years, coming after a sharp decline from the early 1980s to the late 1990s.

In 2005-2009, most home heating fire deaths (79%) and injuries (66%) and half (52%) of associated direct property damage involved stationary or portable space heaters. Space heating poses a much higher risk of fire, death, injury, and loss per million users than central heating.

National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS)

- Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from heating equipment, like the furnace, fireplace, wood stove, or portable space heater.
- Have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year by a qualified professional.
- 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.
- Remember to turn portable heaters off when leaving the room or going to bed.
- Always use the right kind of fuel, specified by the manufacturer, for fuel burning space heaters.
- Make sure the fireplace has a sturdy screen to stop sparks from flying into the room. Ashes should be cool before putting them in a metal container. Keep the container a safe distance away from your home.
- Test smoke alarms monthly.