

Chimney and Woodstove Fire Safety



Yearly, there are hundreds of fire incidents involving chimneys, fireplaces, and woodstoves. These fires are responsible for numerous deaths and injuries, and result in millions of dollars in property losses. This type of fire linked to heating systems makes up a large percentage of all fires that occur each year.

Purchasing

- Be sure the stove you are purchasing to burn wood, pellets or coal is approved by Underwriter's Laboratory or another recognized testing laboratory.

Installation

- A building permit must be obtained prior to the installation of fireplaces, fireplace inserts, or wood, pellet, or coal burning stoves. NYS Building Code requires inspection by the Village's Building Inspector prior to initial use.
- Allow at least 36 inches of clearance (or as the manufacturer's installation guide recommends) around or in front of the appliance to prevent combustibles from coming in contact or exposed to radiant heat sources. Assure that an adequate hearth is provided per the appliance needs to prevent embers or sparks from landing onto combustible flooring.
- Solid-fuel heating appliances cannot share a flue utilized by other solid-fuel, fossil-fuel, or gas-fired appliances.
- For fire- and life-safety purposes, smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detection is required. Install devices and/or assure existing safety alarms are working.

Inspections

- If solid-fuel devices are to be installed in an existing chimney or flue, have the flue/chimney inspected by a qualified person prior to use. Cracks in the flue or mortar joints can allow flames and heated gases to extend into the structure, which is one of the leading causes of building structure fires.



Office of the Fire Marshal Building Department

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Proper Use

- Many types of chimney fires occur due to a buildup of **creosote**, a tar-like byproduct of burning wood. Have your chimney flue cleaned before each heating season. Burn only dry, well-seasoned hardwood to reduce creosote accumulation.
- Do not use flammable liquids to start the fire and don't store your wood or pellet supply against or near the wood stove or fireplace.
- Never leave children unattended near the stove, appliance or fireplace.
- Check that the damper is open before lighting the fire. Failure to do so can result in an accumulation of smoke and carbon monoxide within the home. Do not close the damper before the fire has died out and the embers are cold.
- Use a fireplace screen to prevent flying sparks and embers from falling out onto the floor.
- Install and maintain smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors to provide protection for your family.



Proper Ash Disposal

- Ashes cleaned out from the stove or fireplace should be shoveled into a metal bucket with a metal lid and be placed outside on the ground, away from the building, to prevent fires. Do not place ashes into a paper bag or cardboard box. Ashes and embers can stay hot for days and can ignite combustibles.

Carbon Monoxide & Smoke Alarms

- **Carbon monoxide alarms** are needed in all homes especially where useable chimneys, woodstoves, or carbon monoxide-producing devices are present or there's an attached garage. **Smoke alarms** should be installed in every bedroom or sleeping area, outside each sleeping room, in the basement and in other areas of the home for complete protection.

“Test your safety devices regularly”

“If a fire occurs, CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY”