



Fire Safety

As the weather changes, we experience those frosty nights for which the Pocono's are famous. Most folks just love to light a fire in the fireplace or wood stove to take the chill out of the air. Usually this is the first time a fire has been lit in several months. It is important to remember how dangerous these fires can be if you are not careful and have not performed some basic preventative maintenance and taken precautions as it relates to fire safety.

Over the years, the village has experienced structure fires in which the fire department has responded. Many of these fires started either in the chimney or in and around the fireplace area. All of these fires caused considerable damage to the residence and, in one case, the house burned to the ground sustaining a total loss to the owner.

Have your chimney cleaned and inspected once annually. Burning wood leaves creosote deposits which are flammable in the firebox, flue, and chimney. These buildups must be removed professionally to minimize the risk of chimney fires. Those "quick fix" cleaning logs purchased at a few major retailers are not a replacement for a professional cleaning. Some of the fires experienced in Locust Lake resulted from structure failure rather than creosote build-up. The only way these failures can be detected is through a professional thorough inspection of your complete heating unit. These structural failures can be contributed to years of use or abuse which may take that "one time" under certain conditions to cause that structure fire. Be careful when using the composite fireplace logs. Burn these logs using only the recommended instructions. These logs burn extremely hot and can cause damage to your heating unit if you overload your fireplace or wood stove. Keep combustible materials away from the fireplace or wood stove, including towels, clothing, curtains, bags, boxes, and holiday decorations.

Always keep a fire extinguisher close by and readily accessible. Smoke alarms should be installed on every floor of the home. In some cases, multiple units should be installed in bedrooms and certain storage areas. Carbon dioxide detectors are recommended and should be installed to help protect against this otherwise odorless, tasteless, deadly by-product of wood and coal fires.

Some interesting stats as it pertains to structure fires:

Fire is the sixth leading unintentional cause of injury and death in the United States. Fire ranks as the highest cause of death for children under the age of 15. Asphyxiation is the leading cause of death in a fire, 3 to 1 over burns. Roughly 85 percent of all fire deaths occur where people sleep, such as homes, dorms, or hotels. The majority of fatal fires occur when people are less likely to be alert, such as nighttime sleeping hours.

Every family should formulate a fire plan. Escape routes should be planned and practiced by all family members. Have a pre-determined meeting point outside the home. Ensure that all know to meet at that place so, when firefighters arrive, they can be notified quickly of family status. Call 911 to notify the fire department of the fire emergency. It is important to know your "physical" or "street" address along with the closest intersection when reporting the location. Ensure that you inform the dispatcher that this address is located in Locust Lake Village in Pocono Lake. We live in a large rural area and if a cell phone is used, the enhanced 911 system will not be able to pin point your emergency location.

The above are just a few guidelines pertaining to indoor fire safety which should be followed to help make our community a much safer place to enjoy.