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## Fireplace Safety Tips

The Holiday season is upon us and families all over will be gathering to spend time with one another. There will be gift giving, laughter, and eating as we reminisce about the year that has been, and wonder about what is in store for the year ahead. One of the many joys during the Holiday Season is cozying up indoors and sitting in front of a warm fireplace watching the ever changing flicker of a perfectly built fire. Before you light the fire, there are a few important safety tips to keep in mind. Every type of fireplace, whether wood-burning, gas, or electric, poses a potential danger to everyone in your home. According to the most recent statistics available, there are more than 25,000 chimney fires reported every year in the United States. These fires account for 125 million dollars in property damage. Below are some safety tips to help ensure that your family can safely enjoy the crackling warmth.

- **Have your fireplace cleaned by a certified chimney sweeper prior to lighting your first fire of the season.**
- **Keep a fire extinguisher near the fireplace, just in case the fire gets out of control**
- **Keep the fireplace mantel clear of hanging decorations. If you drape your fireplace mantel with stockings, garland, cards or other decorations, do not light a fire unless you remove these items from the mantel as they can easily catch on fire.**
- **Keep the area around your fireplace clear. Do not position your Christmas tree or anything else near the fireplace. Should embers spark out of the fireplace, you want to make sure there is nothing nearby that will catch fire.**
- **Minimize the build-up of soot and creosote. If you are using real wood, make sure it is well seasoned and that has been split of a minimum of six months. Also think about using manufactured fireplace logs, such as Duraflame, they burn cleaner than real wood. Never burn Christmas trees or treated wood in your fireplace.**
- **Open the damper before starting a fire in the fireplace. Keep the damper open until the fire is completely extinguished.**
- **Beware of a roaring fire. A roaring fire in the fireplace looks attractive, but it is not as safe as a more controlled fire. If the fire becomes too hot, it has the potential to crack your fire place, leading to an expensive repair.**
- **Open the fireplace doors (if you have them) and use a fireplace safety screen to keep embers from falling out of the fireplace.**
- **Never leave a fire unattended. Make sure the fire is extinguished before going to bed and never leave children and pets alone with the fire.**
- **Open a window when you light a fire. Fires require about five times the oxygen that a room usually needs. To make sure your fire burns efficiently, crack a window when you light a fire.**
- **Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Place the detectors throughout your house and make sure and check the batteries twice a year.**
- **Install a chimney cap to keep debris and animals out of the chimney.**

The Holiday Season is one of the greatest times of the year. We can all do our part to make sure that it stays safe for everyone by following these simple fireplace safety tips. Until next time my friends, be prepared and stay safe.

**From all of our Family at the Gerloff Company, we would like to wish you all a Happy and Safe Holiday Season.**

Source: National Fire Protection Association and the Chimney Safety Institute of America



# December 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 SA BOMA Lunch	2
3	4	5 SAMA Luncheon	6 AAFAME Lunch	7 SAABE Social ACA Luncheon	8 IWSA Luncheon	9
10	11	12	13 IIASA Luncheon	14 IREM Holiday Party	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25 Christmas Day Office Closed	26	27	28	29	30
31						

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- Events**
- December 1: SABOMA Luncheon
  - December 5: SAMA Luncheon
  - December 6: AAFAME Luncheon
  - December 7: SAABE Social
  - December 7: ACA Luncheon
  - December 8: IWSA Luncheon
  - December 13: IIASA Luncheon
  - December 14: IREM Holiday Party
  - December 25: Christmas Day -Office Closed

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