



- **Inspect Fireplaces.** Have your chimney inspected by a professional prior to the start of every heating season. Creosote, a chemical substance that forms when wood burns, builds up in chimneys and can cause a chimney fire if the chimney is not properly cleaned. Always protect your family and home by using a sturdy screen when burning fires. Remember to burn only wood--never burn paper or pine boughs, which can float out of the chimney and ignite a neighboring home. Never use flammable liquids in a fireplace. If you are purchasing a factory-built fireplace, select one listed by a testing laboratory, and have it installed according to local codes.
- **Watch Your Wood Stoves.** Be sure your wood or coal stove bears the label of a recognized testing laboratory and meets local fire codes. Follow manufacturers' recommendations for proper use and maintenance. Chimney connections and chimney flues should be inspected at the beginning of each heating season and cleaned if necessary. Follow the same safety rules for wood stoves as you would for space heaters. Burn only wood, and be sure the wood stove is placed on an approved stove board to protect the floor from heat and hot coals. Be sure to check with your local fire department and check local codes before having your wood stove installed.
- **Be Cautious With Portable and Space Heaters.** Place space heaters at least three feet away from anything combustible, including wallpaper, bedding, clothing, pets, and people. Never leave space heaters operating when you are not in the room or when you go to bed. Don't leave children or pets unattended with space heaters, and be sure everyone knows that drying wet mittens or other clothing over space heaters is a fire hazard.
- **Cook with Care.** When cooking, do not wear loose fitting clothing, which can be ignited by hot burners. Always turn pot handles in. Don't store items on the stove top; they could catch fire. Keep kitchen appliances clean and in good condition, and turn them off after use. Don't overload electrical outlets, and don't use appliances with frayed or cracked wires.
- **Prepare a Winter Storm Plan.** Have extra blankets on hand, and ensure that each member of your household has a warm coat, gloves or mittens, hat, and water-resistant boots. Stay tuned for storm warnings by listening to NOAA Weather Radio and your local radio and television stations for updated storm information.