

SAFETY SENSE

Keeping Your Home Safe During The Winter Months

(NAPSA)—With the cold temperatures outside, people are spending more time inside. So it's important to ensure that your house is safe—especially from fire—throughout the winter season.

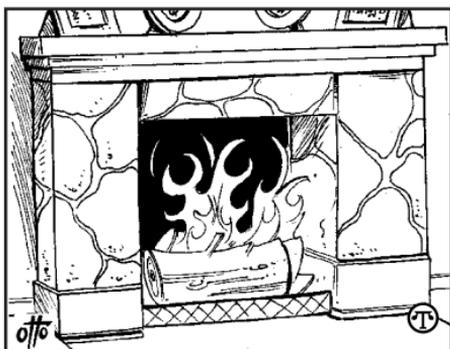
The majority of home fires occur during the winter months. The American Red Cross alone responds to more than 68,000 disasters each year, most of which relate to fires that occur in the home.

A recent survey sponsored by Duracell concluded that only 42 percent of American households check their smoke detector batteries at the recommended once-a-month interval. Additionally, the National Fire Protection Association has found that, in three out of every 10 reported home fires where a smoke detector was in place, the device did not function properly due to missing, dead or disconnected batteries.

As winter kicks into high gear, it's important to take the proper precautions to ensure that your home is as safe as possible during this season:

- Install smoke detectors on each floor of your home. Make sure to check the battery once a month and replace it on a yearly basis. A non-functioning smoke detector is useless.

- Install carbon monoxide detectors on every floor and in every bedroom of your house. These need to be checked regularly as well.



With increased use of fireplaces during the winter, the risk of home fires increases.

- Be prepared for winter storms. Have extra batteries on hand to power flashlights, radios and other important devices. Spare blankets, a few days' supply of bottled water and non-perishable food also are important to have in case winter weather disrupts the power to your home.

- Fireplaces may look fantastic during the winter, but they also could be hazardous if they're not maintained properly. Be sure to have your chimney cleaned each year and install a sturdy screen to prevent wayward embers.

Trusting that you've done all that is possible to make your home safe can help give you peace of mind during the winter months. Once you've checked these safety precautions off of your "to do" list, you can spend time on something more special, like curling up in front of the fireplace with a good book or simply relaxing with your family.