



## **A Safety Message from Chief Tim Kinder**

### **January- Proper Use of Wood Stoves**

The use of wood stoves has significantly increased in recent years. Unfortunately, wood stove and chimney fires have also increased. Wood stoves require extra care in installing, operating, and maintaining as compared to conventional heat sources. Use the following steps when deciding to purchase, install, and use a wood burning stove in your home.

- Purchase only wood stoves that have been listed by a recognized testing agency such as Underwriters Lab. (UL).
- Contact your appropriate building official to ascertain whether a building permit is required for wood stove installation.
- Have the wood stove installed by a professional. Then have the completed installation inspected.

Once installed:

- Keep all flammable material at least 3 feet from the wood stove.
- Purchase a screen to place around the wood stove to prevent children and pets from being accidentally burned. Never leave children unattended in the room with the wood stove while a fire is burning.
- Burn only dry, well-seasoned wood.
- Never use a flammable liquid to start or revive a fire in a wood stove. Many deaths have occurred by ignoring this one safety warning.
- Never use your stove to burn trash.
- Creosote is the product of incomplete combustion and creosote build-up can cause a chimney fire. Opening the air inlets or the stove door and allowing the wood to burn freely for 10-15 minutes several times a week will reduce creosote build-up.

Know the signs of a chimney fire...a loud roar, sucking sounds and shaking pipes. Make sure everyone knows what to do. Practice fire drills and learn how to use a fire extinguisher. If you think you have a chimney fire, call the fire department immediately. Cut off the fire's air supply by closing any intake vents in the firebox. Close the damper. Get everyone out of the house.

Dispose of ashes by placing them in metal containers. Do not put in paper bags or cardboard boxes. Ashes can retain enough heat to start a fire for several days. Wet ashes to make sure they are cold.