

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Are you ready?

Prepping for fire dangers

Plenty of things heat up when the temperature drops, including the risk for fire hazards. Fireplaces, stoves, heating systems, candles, and even electric lights are used more often during the winter than any other time of year, so it makes sense that the risk of home fires increases when the mercury drops.

The U.S. Fire Administration says 905 people die in winter home fires each year. Cooking is the leading cause of all home fires and contributes to around \$2 billion in property loss each year. Understanding potential risks and exercising caution can help homeowners protect themselves, their families and their homes from fire.

Cooking

Home heating fires peak between the hours of 6 p.m. and 8 p.m., when many people are home preparing dinner. The following steps, courtesy of the American Red Cross, can improve safety in the kitchen and reduce the likelihood of a home fire.

- Never leave cooking food unattended, as it can take just seconds for fires to ignite.
- Keep anything that can catch fire away from the stove or other appliances that generate heat.
- Clean regularly to prevent grease buildup.
- Make sure appliances are turned off before leaving the room or going to bed.

Heating

The National Fire Protection Association warns that heating is the second leading cause of home fires, deaths and injuries in the United States. The NFPA offers these safety guidelines.

- Install heating appliances according to manufacturers' instructions or have a professional do the installation.
- Fuel-burning equipment needs to vent to the outside.
- Never use an oven to heat a home.
- Keep anything that can burn away from heating equipment, including portable space heaters.
- Clean and inspect heating appliances regularly.
- Turn off portable heaters when leaving the room or going to bed.

Electric

The National Safety Council estimates that between 600 and 1,000 people die each year from electrocution. Electricity also can contribute to home fires. The Energy Education Council offers these safety suggestions.

- Never force plugs into outlets.
- Check that cords are not frayed or cracked. Do not run cords under carpets or place them in high-traffic areas.
- Use extension cords only on a temporary basis.
- Make sure light bulbs are the proper wattage for fixtures.
- Install ground fault circuit interrupters in kitchens, baths, laundry rooms, and elsewhere, making sure to test them regularly.
- Check periodically for loose wall receptacles and loose wires. Listen for popping or sizzling sounds behind walls.

Home fires are no joke and can be prevented with simple safety checks.



Tips for keeping your pet warm this winter may prevent some unscheduled visits to the vet.

Keeping your pet safe and warm this winter

The arrival of cooler temperatures sparks various changes. Chilly air and precipitation can be dangerous, especially to pets that are unaccustomed to extreme changes in temperature.

Pet owners may be well aware of the hazards of warm weather, including the threat of leaving pets in hot cars. But cold weather also has its share of risks. Heed these tips to keep pets safe and secure.

- Schedule a well visit. The American Veterinary Medical Association suggests scheduling a visit with a veterinarian to check for any medical issues. Cold weather can aggravate symptoms of certain conditions, such as arthritis. A thorough examination can shed light on potential problems.
- Keep homes humidified. Going in and out of the house and moving from cold air to dry indoor heat can affect pets' skin. Itching and flaking may result, causing pets to scratch at such areas. Maintain humidity in the home for comfort. The ASPCA also says to reduce bathing to help preserve essential oils on the skin.
- Protect paws outdoors. Pet paws are sensitive to sand, ice, snow, and chemical ice melts. Massage petroleum jelly or another protectant onto paw pads, or consider the use of pet booties.
- Keep pets indoors more often. Pets should not remain outdoors for long stretches of time in frigid temperatures, even if they are accustomed to roaming during other seasons, advises The Humane Society of the United States.
- Provide options for sleeping. Come the winter, cats and dogs may need new sleep spaces to avoid drafts and stay warm. Give them other spots they can call their own.
- Consider a sweater or vest. Some pets are more tolerant to the cold than others. However, some dogs and cats may benefit from a sweater, vest or coat designed for pets to offer a little more insulation.
- Update identification and contact information. Snow and ice can mask scent cues that help pets find their way home. Update contact information and make sure pets' collars are on tightly.
- Keep coolant and antifreeze locked away. Coolant and antifreeze are lethal to dogs and cats and should be kept out of reach. Clean up any spills from vehicles promptly.
- Provide fresh food and water. Pets may burn more calories trying to stay warm. Be sure the animal has a little extra food and plenty of water to stay sated and hydrated.

Winter weather requires pets owners to make changes so pets can remain happy and safe.

Keep critters out this fall



Human beings are not the only creatures looking for warm and cozy spots to ride out autumn and winter. Very often wild animals see homes as the perfect spots to nest and survive the cold. Fall is a great time to inspect your home top to bottom and make sure there are no points of entry for unwanted guests. The Humane Society notes that deteriorated trim and fascia boards can make great entry points for animals like squirrels, raccoons, skunks, and possums. Other animals may bed down under porches or decks or even inside chimneys. Seal any holes or repair points that are penetrable by cold animals. Just be sure to inspect the home prior to sealing or capping any potential entry points to be certain there aren't any animals already living inside. Otherwise you can trap unwanted animals in your home. Test possible entry points by sealing them loosely with a paper towel or insulation and see if the material gets pushed out.



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Meet the DJ/Program Host



ROB WARD

Rob loves the music he is playing! Rob invites you to tune in on Wednesdays, call-in your requests and enjoy some great Rock 'n Roll, Soul and Rhythm & Blues tunes. Rob was born in San Francisco in 1954 and grew up listening to KYA 1260 and KEWB 910, then later to KFRC 610. Rob formed his first garage band in 1966 as a 12-year-old, and continued with the same bandmates until early 1969. If it was played on top 40 radio, Rob heard it. His love for 50s and 60s music continues today and he loves keeping the music of the 50s and 60s alive, especially songs that should have been heard, but weren't. When he's not spinning records at KNND, Rob is the co-owner of Grill & Chill, "the little blue box that rocks on the corner of 9th and Whiteaker". He invites you to stop by and say hi.



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PUT TOGETHER A PLAN

Make sure all the pieces are in place to render you and your family prepared in the event of a natural disaster.

- Listen to radio or television newscasts for the latest weather information, and follow all evacuation directions and suggestions.
- Keep a stock of non-perishable food items as well as bottled water on hand inside your home.
- Keep a 72 Hour Kit on hand inside your home that is easy to get to in the event of a disaster.

For more information and tips on disaster response and preparedness, contact your local emergency services center.
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