



Home

HOW SAFE IS YOUR HEAT SOURCE

Malfunctioning heat sources are the second-leading cause of house fires in the United States, topped only by cooking accidents.

These tips will help ensure your home and family stay safe.

If you own a woodburning unit:

- **Request and pass an inspection** by a building inspector or fire marshal before using your appliance.
- **Have your chimney professionally cleaned** once a year to prevent creosote buildup (a black, sticky deposit formed by unburned wood gases), which can ignite chimney fires.
- **Don't burn trash.** Use only dry firewood or the correct fuel for your stove.
- **Make sure fires are out before you go to sleep.** Never close the damper with hot ashes in the fireplace. A closed damper will help the fire heat up again and will force toxic carbon monoxide into the house.
- **Remove ashes regularly** in a covered metal container, not paper bags. Just one hot coal could spark a blaze.
- **Keep all combustibles at least three feet from the unit.**

If you heat with a furnace:

- Have all fuel pipes, vent connectors, gas vents, automatic safety controls, and chimneys inspected annually.
- Change filters every three months that the furnace is in use, even if it's simply circulating air in the summer months.
- Inspect the walls and ceiling near the furnace. If they're hot or discolored, additional pipe insulation or clearance may be required.

PEMCO MUTUAL INSURANCE CO.
325 EASTLAKE AVENUE EAST
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98109

1-800-GO-PEMCO
(1-800-467-3626)
pemco.com