

Division of Fire Safety

OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL & STATE FIRE ACADEMY

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www.vtfiresafety.org



Fire Fact Sheet

Chimney Fires

Chimney fires occur when carbon residue deposits, known as creosote, burn within the venting area of a chimney or stove pipe. These fires can burn extremely hot, go through the walls of the chimney and cause a structure fire. Smoke from these fires, because of the restricted flue, can force carbon monoxide and other toxic gases into the structure.

There are over 30,000 structure fires caused by chimney fires in the US every year, resulting in over 100 million dollars in property loss. Luckily, these fires are entirely preventable.

How To Prevent A Chimney Fire:

- Use dry, seasoned wood only.
- Build small, hot fires that burn completely and produce less smoke.
- Never burn cardboard boxes, wrapping paper, trash or Christmas trees, these can spark chimney fires.
- Install stovepipe thermometers to help monitor flue temperatures where wood stoves are in use, so you can adjust burning practices as needed.

Cleaning Stay Safe:

- Be sure your home is equipped with working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Install CO alarms near the bedrooms. Test your smoke and CO alarms monthly and change the batteries at least once a year
- Practice a home fire escape plan with your family
- Consider installing a residential sprinkler system.
- Have your chimney professionally cleaned and inspected every year. A list of certified chimney sweeps is available at our website, www.vtfiresafety.org
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Shut down the stove, Leave the building and call 911 immediately if:

- Smoke begins to fill your house.
- You see flame at the top of your chimney.
- You hear a loud roar, sucking sounds, or shaking pipes,



If the fire department responds to your house for a chimney fire:

You may find that holes have been cut in your walls or roof. This is normal. This is how the fire department checks for extension, fire that has moved from the chimney into the structure.

Have your chimney professionally checked and cleaned before using it again—A fire in your chimney is not a normal occurrence and is likely to have caused damage to the chimney lining.



For additional information contact your local fire department or visit www.vtfiresafety.org

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