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Winter heating safety tips

Ways to keep safe and warm this winter

Newmarket, ON, February 2, 2016 – Central York Fire Services (CYFS) would like to remind Aurora and Newmarket residents how to safely warm your homes by keeping the following heating safety tips in mind this winter.

Space heaters:

- Only purchase space heaters that have been approved by Underwriters Laboratories of Canada (ULC) to ensure the unit is safe to use in your home. Check that the units you currently own are also ULC approved.
- Install any space heating equipment in accordance with local codes and follow the manufacturer's instructions or have a professional do the installation.
- All heaters need space. Keep anything that can burn at least 1 metre (3 feet) away from heating equipment, like a furnace, fireplace, wood stove, or portable space heater.
- Establish 'kid-free' and 'pet-free' zones (minimum 1 metre or 3 feet) around open fires and space heaters.
- Plug space heaters directly into wall outlets and never into an extension cord or power bar.
- Turn portable heaters off when leaving the room or going to bed.
- Always use the right kind of fuel, specified by the manufacturer, for fuel burning space heaters. Refuel only in a well-ventilated area and when equipment is cool.

Chimneys and fire places:

- Have all heating systems and chimneys cleaned and inspected annually by a qualified service technician to ensure adequate ventilation. Snow, ice and other debris can block gases from escaping your chimney.
- Never use your stove or oven to heat your home.
- In your fireplace or wood stove, use only dry, seasoned wood. When starting the fire, use only paper or kindling wood and not a flammable liquid. Do not use artificial logs in wood stoves.
- Make sure your fireplace has a sturdy screen around it, to prevent sparks and embers from flying into the room.
- Watch for smoke coming into the room. This could indicate a blockage in the chimney or a faulty damper control mechanism.
- Allow ashes from your woodstove or fireplace to cool down before emptying them. Once cooled, empty the ashes into a metal container with a tight-fitting lid. Keep the container a safe distance away from your home.

Other appliances:

- Inspect exhaust vents for the dryer, furnace, wood burning or gas stove, fireplace and heat recover ventilator to ensure they are not obstructed by snow or ice build-up, especially during or after a storm.
- Install smoke alarms on every storey of the home and carbon monoxide alarms outside all sleeping areas. Test your alarms monthly, and remember they don't last forever. Check the manufacturer's instructions for when to replace the unit. A common rule for carbon monoxide alarms is to replace them every five to seven years from the manufacture date, and replace smoke alarms every 10 years

For more information on heating safety or fire related information, please visit www.cyfs.ca.

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