

## Community Risk Reduction January 2021 Newsletter

Dear Subscriber,

As winter sets in and temperatures plummet, we spend more time indoors and operate heating equipment to keep us warm. Heat can keep us safe and alive, but it also could take both away. Let us not forget heat is one of the elements of the fire triangle. The other two are oxygen and fuel. Because we need heat in winter and oxygen and fuel are readily available in our homes, we must be extra cautious to keep them under control. Ensure your heating equipment is maintained per manufacturer's recommendations. According to the National Fire Protection Association, "Carbon monoxide (CO) is called the invisible killer because you cannot see it or smell it. This poisonous gas is created when fossil fuels, such as kerosene, gasoline, coal, natural gas, propane, methane or wood, do not burn completely. The only way to detect CO is with a working CO alarm". For more information on carbon monoxide poisoning and other winter fire hazards around the house, please click on the links below.

<https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Seasonal-fire-causes/Put-A-Freeze-on-Winter-Fires>

<https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Teaching-tools/Community-tool-kits/Keeping-Your-Community-Safe-with-Carbon-Monoxide-Alarms>

The following resources and websites can help you further prepare for, respond to, and recover from a winter storm.

[https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1494008826172-76da095c3a5d6502ec66e3b81d5bb12a/FEMA\\_2017\\_WinterStorm\\_HTP\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1494008826172-76da095c3a5d6502ec66e3b81d5bb12a/FEMA_2017_WinterStorm_HTP_FINAL.pdf)

[https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-03/fema\\_faith-communities\\_winter-storm-playbook\\_0.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-03/fema_faith-communities_winter-storm-playbook_0.pdf)

Santa Fe County Fire Department has listened to our constituents' concerns and has updated/amended the online open burning permit. The permit is still free of charge and has been divided into two permits: Agricultural/Vegetation and Ceremonial/Recreational. For more information click on the link below.

[https://www.santafecountynm.gov/fire/burn\\_permit](https://www.santafecountynm.gov/fire/burn_permit)

Stay healthy, safe, warm, and stay informed.

Sincerely,

**J.R. Blay**

***Santa Fe County Fire Department  
Assistant Chief of Community Risk Reduction  
Fire Marshal***



**December, January and February** have more home fires from heating sources than any other month during the year. Below are some tips to help prevent accidental fires in the home.

**Space Heaters, Portable Heaters:**

- Keep all combustible materials at least 3' away from heaters.
- Turn heaters off when you go to bed or leave the room.
- Plug portable heaters directly into electrical receptacles.
- Make sure electrical cords are in good condition, not worn or frayed.
- Follow manufacturer recommendations.

**Fireplace:**

- Have a glass or metal screen in front of fireplace to help prevent embers or sparks from jumping out.
- Put the fire out before going to sleep or leaving home.
- Put ashes in a metal container with a lid, outside, and away from any combustible materials.
- Have chimney inspected annually to ensure chimney is clean and safe to use.

**Wood Stove, Pellet Stove:**

- Keep all combustible materials at least 3' away from wood or pellet stoves.
- Put the fire out before going to sleep or leaving home.
- Have chimney inspected annually to ensure chimney is clean and safe to use.
- Follow manufacturer recommendations.

- It is recommended to have heating sources checked annually by a certified professional to ensure they are working properly and any maintenance required is completed.
- Carbon Monoxide (CO) is often called the invisible killer, as it is an odorless, colorless gas when certain fuels do not burn completely. Have a carbon monoxide detector located in every level of the house. Carbon monoxide detectors should be checked monthly to confirm they are in good working condition.
- Smoke detectors should be located on every level of the home, in every bedroom, and close to sleeping areas. Smoke detectors should be checked monthly to confirm they are in good working condition.

[https://www.nfpa.org/-/media/Files/Public-Education/Resources/Safety-tip-sheets/Heating\\_Safety.pdf](https://www.nfpa.org/-/media/Files/Public-Education/Resources/Safety-tip-sheets/Heating_Safety.pdf)

### Firewood storage:



Firewood should be stored a minimum of 20 feet from structures and separated from the crown of trees by a minimum horizontal distance of 15 feet per the 2015 International Wildland-Urban Interface Code.

When stacking wood it is recommended to store it either on a wood rack on something to elevate the wood off the ground to allow the wood to fully dry. It is also recommended that if the wood is stacked close to a wall or fence to allow several inches between the wood and fence to allow proper circulation.

### Fireplace, Woodstove Ash Removal:



- Ash removed from a fireplace can stay hot enough to reignite if given a fuel source. The ash acts as an insulator that keeps coals from burning out completely, it can stay hot enough to reignite up to 4 days after the ash has been removed from its original source (fireplace, woodstove, pellet stove, etc.)
- All ashes should be stored in a fire-resistant container that has a lid to prevent air from flowing and reigniting the fire. Keep the metal ash container away from anything that can burn.

➤ Before disposal, ash should be soaked with water and rechecked for hot spots.

**Electrical Safety** is often overlooked and forgotten. As something used daily to light up a room, cook a meal, or charge computers/phones electrical sources can be worn out and become defective. A fire can start from an electrical source without a flame ever being produced from the electrical site.



Some key tips to preventing an electrical emergency include:

- Have only one heat-producing appliance (i.e space heater, microwave, toaster) in a wall outlet at a time.
- Extension cords should only be a temporary solution, contact an electrician to install additional wall outlets if needed.
- Inspect electrical cords, if they are cracked, damaged, or frayed then they should be replaced.
- Do not use light bulbs that exceed the recommended wattage on the light fixture.
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x\\_7RFiv7\\_lw&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x_7RFiv7_lw&feature=emb_logo)

## Winter Storms

Winter storms can bring many unexpected challenges. Whether you are stuck at home in a blizzard, without power, or end up on the side of the road trapped in a vehicle, precautions can be taken to ensure you are ready when the unexpected happens.

### Home Emergency Check List

	Gallon water jugs for each person
	Nonperishable ready to eat food - i.e.: Canned meats/fruits/veggies, crackers
	Flashlights and extra batteries
	First aid Kit
	Extra supplies for infants/toddlers - i.e.: Formula, diapers
	Can opener for food
	Keep home identification clear - i.e.: identifying number on house, driveway entrance
	Keep entryway to house clear
	Battery operated charging source available for cell phones

[https://www.nfpa.org/-/media/Files/Public-Education/Resources/Community-tool-kits/Get-Ready/hand/e/supplies\\_kit\\_checklist.ashx](https://www.nfpa.org/-/media/Files/Public-Education/Resources/Community-tool-kits/Get-Ready/hand/e/supplies_kit_checklist.ashx)

<https://www.nfpa.org/-/media/Files/Public-Education/Resources/Safety-tip-sheets/WinterStormSafety.ashx>

### Vehicle Emergency Supply List:

	Water
	Nonperishable ready to eat food – i.e. trail mix, crackers, dried fruits
	Flashlights with extra batteries
	First aid kit
	Whistle to signal for help
	Extra supplies for infants/toddlers – i.e. formula, diapers
	Extra clothing layers i.e. jacket/coat long sleeve shirt, pants, socks, hat, gloves
	Sleeping bag or warm blankets
	Signal flare
	Shovel to clear area around vehicle
	Something bright and reflective to attach to vehicle to be seen by emergency services

If stranded in a vehicle keep the car exhaust cleared.

Rotate turning vehicle on and off to keep heat in the vehicle but also conserving fuel source. Attach something bright and reflective to vehicle to be seen by emergency services. Use road flare to mark location.

## Fall Prevention:

Falls can happen anytime, anywhere. With few precautions, fall risks can be greatly reduced both inside and outside of the home.



Making sure walkways are cleared of snow and ice lower slip hazards.

Avoid putting anything on a walk path that can obstruct your path such as furniture or electrical cords.

Limit how many throw rugs are in your house and use non-slip tape on the underside to keep them in place.

Install handrails on both sides of staircases.

Install grab bars in the shower and around the toilet.

Water can create slippery surfaces, if possible install non-slip pads on the bottom of the shower or tub.



**Burn Permits:**

It has been broken up into two categories including Agricultural/Vegetation and Recreational/Ceremonial.

Although the process to apply is the same as in the past, the active permit times have changed, and the sizes for the burns have changed.

[https://www.santafecountynm.gov/fire/burn\\_permit](https://www.santafecountynm.gov/fire/burn_permit)

**Agricultural/ Vegetation:**

There are three options to choose from: Irrigation/Drainage Ditch Clearing, Slash Pile, Crop/Fallow Field Maintenance. These permits are active for one year from the date of application, and the burn times are 7 days a week, 6:00AM-3:00PM. Prior to each burn the applicant must notify the RECC.

**Recreational/Ceremonial:**

There are three options to choose from: Open Pit/BBQ, Ceremonial Bonfire, and Sweat Lodge/Open Pit. All three options allow a maximum size of 3 feet in diameter by 2 feet in height. Burn times are 7 days a week with no time restrictions. Prior to each burn the applicant must notify the RECC.

**Beginning 04/01/2021, only new Open Burn Permits shall be approved . (See changes)**



Santa Fe County Connect | a network for health and well-being

Santa Fe County Connect is a program created by Santa Fe County to work closely with the public to identify problems and co-create solutions. There is a Resource Directory available to the public for different forms of aid.

For more information contact:  
(505)992-9849

<https://www.santafecountynm.gov/media/files/Community%20Services/Behavior/ENGLISHRD.pdf>



Due to COVID19, traditional fire prevention public education methods were unavailable. Santa Fe County Fire Prevention has collaborated with The Hartford to gain access to their Junior Fire Marshal Training Academy. The program allows the public to gain access to home fire safety and prevention information for young children. The program is broken into several short lessons, and, when completed, the participants receive a certificate of completion.

For more information regarding the program, or for additional resources you can email

[rpatty@santafecountynm.gov](mailto:rpatty@santafecountynm.gov)

<https://www.juniorfiremarshal.com/>