



Winter Fire Safety Tips

Winter brings a unique set of fire dangers that you need to be aware of. Follow these fire safety tips to help keep yourself and your family safe.

Fireplaces and Chimneys

- Clean chimneys and flues before you light the first fire of the season.
- Always use a fireguard or spark-guard when using an open fire.
- Never throw rubbish into the fireplace – particularly batteries and aerosol cans.
- Always empty ashes and ashtrays into a metal bin and pour water over them before disposal. Remember that ashes can take up to 5 days to cool.
- Keep matches, lighters and anything else that can create fire out of reach of children.

Electric Blankets

- Replace your electric blanket every 5 years with newer heat-protected models. Worn and old electric blankets can give you an electric shock and start a fire.
- At the first sign of wear, have your electric blanket checked by a qualified electrician or replace it.
- Don't place heavy objects on the bed while the blanket is on and never sleep with it on.
- Make sure the blanket is always flat on the bed and the controls or cords are not twisted or caught. Twisted cords are a common cause of electric blanket fires.
- Roll your blanket when you store it for the summer, don't fold it.

Heaters and Clothes Dryers

- Remember the 'one metre from the heater' rule – always keep furniture, curtains, clothes and children at least one metre away from heaters and fireplaces.
- Never cover heating appliances or store objects on top of them.
- Don't overload clothes dryers and clean the lint filter after each load cycle.

Portable LPG Gas Heaters

- Check to see the gas hose is in good condition and doesn't show signs of damage or wear.
- If the heater does not light straight away, turn it off and then try again. Don't let the gas build up before trying to relight it.
- Always have fresh air coming into rooms where a gas heater is in use.
- Have your heater serviced every 12 months.

Community Responsibility

Everyone has a responsibility to keep their community safe from fire.

That means being fire safe and teaching your friends and family to be fire safe too.

- **Look Out:** Keep an eye out on your neighbours properties and report any suspicious smoke.
- **Reach Out:** Discuss fire safety with neighbours and share contact details so you can act in an emergency. Reach out to FENZ to request a Home Fire Safety Visit for yourself or a neighbour.
- **Help Out:** Offer to install smoke alarms for neighbours who may not be able to do it themselves or help your neighbour create a 3-step escape plan.
- **Discuss fire safety** with anyone visiting your property. Outline your escape plan and make sure they understand what to do in an emergency.

Want to make sure your home is fire safe? Use the fire safety checklist on the Fire and Emergency NZ website to find anything that might be putting you at risk. For more fire safety tips at home, visit fireandemergency.nz/at-home