

Safety after the storm

ALTERNATIVE HOME HEATING SAFETY GUIDE

When the power is out due to a storm or other emergency, alternative heating sources such as fireplaces and space heaters can be used as temporary solutions. However, stoves, ovens and grills should never be used for heating a room or home. UL, a global safety science company, offers the following tips for alternative home heating safety.

Space Heater Safety

- Use your space heater only as a supplementary source of heat. These devices are not intended to replace your home's heating system and should not be used unless their use is supervised by an adult.
- Carefully read the operating instructions and markings the manufacturer includes with the space heater before using the product. These instructions contain important information about how to use the product safely and maintain it properly. The box or the instruction manual will indicate whether a space heater is intended for use in locations such as bathrooms or outdoors — if this information is missing, do not use the heater in either of these areas.
- Carefully inspect your heater and its electrical cord and plug before use. Never use a heater that is damaged.
- To prevent a fire, keep combustibles such as draperies, clothing and furniture at a safe distance — at least three feet away — from the space heater.
- Pay special attention to children if there's a space heater in the room. Remind children not to poke their fingers or objects through the protective guard. Even the slightest contact with a heating coil can cause a severe electric shock or burn.
- Avoid using an extension cord with your space heater. If you must use an extension cord, it should have a rating 1.25 times the wattage rating of the heater. For example, you should use a cord rated at least 1,875 watts with a 1,500-watt heater.
- Unplug your space heater when it is not in use.



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Fireplace Safety

- Fireplace and chimney fires are most often caused by buildup of flammable creosote, the product of wood smoke and moisture. To prevent this, wood and coal stoves, fireplaces, chimneys, and chimney connectors should be inspected annually by a professional and cleaned as often as inspections suggest. If you suspect your chimney needs to be professionally inspected, do not use it, even in an emergency.
- It's important to burn properly seasoned wood. Wood that is green has more moisture and is likely to smolder, leading to more creosote buildup and a greater risk of fire.
- Combustible materials, such as paint thinners, gasoline or kerosene, should never be used or stored near the furnace. Similarly, remove all decorative flammable items — such as holiday stockings or garlands — from around the fireplace before lighting a fire.
- Supervise a lit fireplace at all times.
- It is essential that your fireplace has a sturdy screen to prevent sparks from flying into the room.
- Allow fireplace ashes to cool before disposing of them in a metal container.

Most important, the best defense is a good offense. Install UL Listed smoke alarms and carbon monoxide (CO) alarms throughout your home to warn about a fire or faulty furnace, fireplace or other venting problems.

About UL

UL fosters safe living and working conditions for people everywhere through the application of science to solve safety, security and sustainability challenges. The UL Mark engenders trust enabling the safe adoption of innovative new products and technologies. Everyone at UL shares a passion to make the world a safer place. We test, inspect, audit, certify, validate, verify, advise, and train. We support these efforts with software solutions for safety and sustainability.

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