

## Take steps to prevent dangerous house fires

Members of The New Jersey Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board are urging families to take time during the winter months to review the dangers of fire with their loved ones.

Incidents of fire occur most frequently during the winter months. Many of these winter fires are due to fires caused by electrical and heating sources in peoples' homes.

"With the increased use of fireplaces and home heating systems during the winter months, families need to take the proper precautions to prevent potentially dangerous fire situations," said Vincent Fichera, executive director of the New Jersey Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board. "We believe that if everyone takes a few moments to review fire safety techniques and protocols with their loved ones, lives will be saved and potential tragedies avoided."

Below are some fire safety tips recommended by the New Jersey Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board to keep your family safe:

- Keep a watchful eye on space heaters, and make sure there is at least three feet of clear space around them when in operation.

Do not leave a space heater unattended.

- Be careful not to overload electrical sockets inside and outside your home.

Keep electric holiday decorations and their plugs evenly spaced and a safe distance away from heaters and other flammable items.

- Check smoke detectors to ensure they are working properly and have full battery power.

It's recommended that you check the batteries in your smoke alarms when its time to turn the clocks forward or backward.

- Develop an escape plan with your family from multiple rooms within your home, both upstairs and downstairs.

- Take time to review the escape plan with your family, including a practice fire drill.

- Keep an up-to-date list of emergency fire, police and medical phone numbers near your telephone.

Show every member of your family where this information is kept and also remember to teach all children how to call for help in the event of an emergency.

- Keep flammable liquids free from heating sources, and store them in a cool location.

Also, keep them separate from other stored items such as paper products and cloth materials.

- Make sure windows of children's rooms are well marked to indicate them to firefighters.

- Consider researching and investing in residential fire sprinklers to protect your family and property. To date, there has never been a multiple loss of life in a structure that had a fully-installed and well-maintained fire sprinkler system.

The New Jersey Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board is a cooperative partnership advocating installation and proper care of fire sprinkler systems as a highly effective means of helping save lives and property.

Working alongside fire and government authorities in the state, the advisory board supports educational programs and legislative measures to increase consideration, promote proper usage and enhance/enforce building codes for fire sprinklers in new and renovated properties.

