

Tips for staying safe and warm

In rural areas, heating fires account for 36 percent of all house fires, according to CalFire.

Tips for a warm, worry-free winter:

- Make sure your wood burning (pellets or firewood) stove or fire place is clean and ready for the winter. Chimney fires often occur when the first cold nights arrive and someone lights a fire in a stove or fireplace that has not been properly maintained. Creosote builds up over time in your chimney or stove pipe and can catch on fire which can spread to your roof and/or attic. It is best to hire a professional who can check the entire system, not just clean out the chimney or stove pipe.

- Never use an outdoor heater, such as a patio heater or barbecue, indoors. They are designed to burn fuels such as propane, natural gas or wood all of which

release carbon monoxide. Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless, tasteless gas that kills 500 people annually and sends another 15,000 to emergency rooms.

- Never heat your home with your kitchen oven, they are not designed for that purpose and could overheat and catch fire. If your oven is gas, the resulting carbon monoxide can pose a deadly threat.

- If you use space heaters, make sure they are a minimum of three feet away from flammable materials such as curtains, drapes, furniture, etc. Also make sure

they will shut off automatically if they are tipped over. Kerosene space heaters are illegal to use inside a home in

California. You can use them in a garage or barn where the ventilation is more open and able to dissipate the fumes.

– Provided by CalFire