

Safety measures critical with wood stoves

Lake Tahoe's fire departments are reminding people that it's dangerous to dispose of fireplace, wood stove or barbecue ashes in improper containers and locations.

Embers, often concealed in what appears to be cold ashes, can remain hot enough to kindle a fire for several days. It is recommended to wait at least 96 hours and/or four days before disposing ashes.

To safely dispose of ashes:

- Put discarded ashes in a heavy metal container, douse with water, and cover with fitted metal lid.
- Store the container outside and away from structures, decks, fences, wood piles and other combustible materials.
- Never use a vacuum cleaner to pick up ashes.
- Never put ashes in bags or boxes.
- Contact your local trash collection agency for their disposal recommendations after ashes have cooled and embers are out.

Fire officials also say to regularly inspect chimney. Soot and creosote are combustible materials that accumulate inside chimneys and create a dangerous fire hazard unless they are removed.

Last month a **lakeside home in Zephyr Cove** was destroyed by an escaped fire due to a malfunctioning wood burning appliance.