



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**The Cleveland County Health Department Offers Tips to Help Stay Warm and SAFE this Winter Season**

(Shelby, NC)—As stated by the Home Safety Council, more home fires are started in the winter by heating equipment than any other cause. Portable and electric space heaters are the most dangerous. However, it is possible to be warm and safe this winter by following a few simple steps. The Cleveland County Health Department encourages community members to adhere to these preventive steps offered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to promote personal health and safety throughout this winter season.

**Heat Your Home Safely:**

If you plan to use a wood stove, fireplace, or space heater, be extremely careful. Follow the manufacturer's instructions and remember these safety tips:

- Use fireplace, wood stoves, or other combustion heaters only if they are properly vented to the outside and do not leak flue gas into the indoor air space.
- Do not burn paper in a fireplace.
- Ensure adequate ventilation if you must use a kerosene heater.
- Use only the type of fuel your heater is designed to use—don't substitute.
- Do not place a space heater within 3 feet of anything that may catch on fire, such as drapes, furniture, or bedding, and never cover your space heater.
- Never place a space heater on top of furniture or near water.
- Never leave children unattended near a space heater.
- Make sure that the cord of an electric space heater is not a tripping hazard but do not run the cord under carpets or rugs.
- Avoid using extension cords to plug in your space heater.
- If your space heater has a damaged electrical cord or produces sparks, do not use it.
- Store a multipurpose, dry-chemical fire extinguisher near the area to be heated.
- Protect yourself from carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning by installing a battery-operated CO detector and never using generators, grills, camp stoves, or similar devices indoors.

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**Cook Safely:**

- Never use a charcoal or gas grill indoors—the fumes are deadly.
- Never use an electric generator indoors, inside the garage, or near the air intake of your house because of the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Plug in appliances to the generator using individual heavy-duty, outdoor-rated cords.
- Do not use the generator or appliances if they are wet because of the risk of electrocution.
- Do not store gasoline indoors where the fumes could ignite.

With its cold and often stormy weather, winter presents many safety challenges both indoors and out. Being prepared and following these simple safety tips can help you stay safe and warm this winter season. For more information on winter safety, you may visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website at <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/guide.asp>.

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