

# Chimney Fire Safety

**A Fire Safety Message from the  
New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control**

## Chimney maintenance for wood burning appliances.

Chimneys are one of the most common locations of residential structure fires in New York State. The Chimney Safety Institute of America reports that creosote accumulation is the leading cause of chimney fires. A chimney that is dirty, blocked or is in disrepair can inhibit proper venting of smoke up the flue and can also cause a chimney fire. Nearly all residential fires originating in the chimney are preventable.

An annual chimney inspection by a qualified chimney sweep can prevent fire or carbon monoxide poisoning. To keep your home safe from chimney fires follow these guidelines.

### **1 Maintenance** - Good maintenance is a very important step in preventing chimney fires!

- Have your chimney checked every year by a qualified chimney professional.
- Burn only well seasoned hardwoods.
- Install a chimney cap.
- Install a carbon monoxide detector.
- Have your chimney sweep ensure that your chimney has an appropriate liner.
- Following a violent storm, earthquake, flood or lightning strike, have your chimney inspected for damage - inside and out.

### **2 Prevention** - Remember prevention is your best defense against fire.

If you have a wood or coal stove, be sure it is installed at least 36 inches away from the wall. Keep combustible materials well away from the stove and chimney connector. Place an approved stove board under the unit to protect the floor from heat and hot coals which might drop out.

### **3 Be Prepared** - Know what to do in case of fire. If you suspect a chimney fire, evacuate your home and call 9-1-1



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