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NEWS RELEASE

Heating Safety Tips

El Paso Fire Department reminds the public to heat homes safely

El Paso, Texas – As temperatures continue to drop, the El Paso Fire Department would like to remind the public to use caution when using their home heaters and fireplaces. These items should be checked and inspected for the dangerous release of carbon monoxide gas. Signs of carbon monoxide poisoning may resemble flu symptoms, including dizziness, fatigue and nausea, but without fever. People may be unaware that the dangerous gas is overcoming them, as it is odorless, tasteless and colorless.

The El Paso Fire Department recommends having qualified, professionals inspect their heaters, furnaces and fireplaces to make sure that they are in good working condition and that all safety controls are working properly. **It is very important to have working carbon monoxide detectors near those devices and working smoke alarms in every room.**

Additionally, many families turn to alternative heat sources, such as space heaters, to help warm their homes. Many are unaware that the risk of fire from space heaters is 3 to 4 times higher than from central heating equipment. When using space heaters, the public is urged to follow these simple precautions to keep safe and warm this winter:

1. After reading the instruction manual and checking for the testing approval mark, inspect the heater cord for frays and/or damage. Do not use it if it is damaged.
2. Plug the heater directly into the outlet and never use extension cords.
3. Keep the space heater at least three feet away from anything that can catch fire or is damp or wet, and be sure to use only a flat, level, floor surface.
4. Keep space heaters away from high-traffic areas, but never leave them unattended or in rooms with unsupervised children.
5. Make sure the circuit where the heater is plugged in can handle the added demand. Always turn off, unplug and safely store the heater when not in use.

The public is encouraged to get a comprehensive list of these and other safety tips at <http://www.elpasotexas.gov/fire-department/divisions/fire-prevention> under the “Safety Tips” area.

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