



Boxborough Fire Department

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Randolph T. White
Fire Chief

***** PRESS RELEASE *****

Now, as the cold weather has arrived, many people are using fireplaces and woodstoves to keep warm. In the last 9 weeks, the Boxborough Fire Department has responded to two fires that were attributed due to improper disposal of ashes.

Ashes cleaned out from a wood stove or fireplace can stay hot for days and ignite combustibles. A single live ember can continue to smolder undetected for quite some time and can stay hot for days and ignite combustibles. “*NEVER*” place ashes into a paper bag or cardboard box. Ashes should be shoveled into a metal bucket with a metal lid, and immediately placed outside well away from the building to prevent fires.

Safety Precautions When Handling Ashes

- Treat all ashes as hot
- Wait at least 24 hours after a fire before removing ashes
- Do not add live embers to the ash bucket
- Do not add anything combustible to ash bucket
- Place lid over the ash bucket to reduce the possibility of oxygen reaching a live ember or smoldering ashes in the ash bucket
- Do not place ash bucket (with ashes) next to anything combustible. Place ash bucket immediately outside minimum of 25 feet away from combustibles
- Allow ash bucket to sit for at least three days before disposing of ashes
- Wet ashes after disposing of them, just like you would a campfire

No one expects a fire to happen in their home, so take a moment to be prepared for the unexpected by appropriately marking your address. A properly marked address will greatly diminish the time it takes for responders to confirm an address when seconds count. Make sure you have working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms on every level of your home. Installing smoke alarms warn of a fire, but also having carbon monoxide (CO) alarms in the home to warn about deadly fumes from a faulty furnace, fireplace and oven flue or other venting problem. Problems with heating systems are the #1 source of carbon monoxide in homes. Both types of alarms are required by law in Massachusetts. It is a proven fact that these detectors save lives if properly installed, maintained, and tested on a regular basis.

Remember when you change your clocks for daylight savings time; change the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. *“Change Your Clocks, Change Your Batteries”*.

The Boxborough Fire Department offers a free service to all residents to change your batteries in all smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, test the functionality of these detectors and perform a home safety walk-through. Please visit www.boxboroughfire.com to register.