

CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection Amador-El Dorado Unit

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Chimneys Need TLC

Camino – The Amador-El Dorado Unit (AEU) of CAL FIRE would like to remind everyone that chimney fires can often times be avoided if you properly maintain your fireplace on an annual basis. People dismiss maintenance on their fireplaces, wood burning stoves, pellet stoves and propane stove, taking for granted that they will work when they need them. According to the US Fire Administration, residential heating fires originating in the chimney or chimney flue account for nearly 56% of residential building fires across the nation. The majority of these fires occur between the hours of 5-9 PM during the winter months when use is highest.

What can you do to protect yourself, your family and your home?

- ✓ According to the National Fire Protection Association, you should have your chimney or fireplace professionally cleaned annually. A professionally trained chimney sweep will check the entire system from your roof to your fireplace or wood/pellet/gas stove, including making sure the pipe is properly installed and hasn't degraded over time, they will clean the entire system and make any needed repairs so that you can safely heat your home.
- ✓ Chimney fires occur throughout the winter when someone lights a fire in a stove or fireplace that has not been properly maintained. Creosote builds up over time in your chimney or stove pipe and can catch on fire which can spread to your roof and/or attic. As with anything, stove pipes and chimneys do deteriorate and the surrounding wood in your roof and attic can become compromised and eventually catch on fire.
- ✓ Even if you don't use your fireplace, forest critters can nest in your home's chimney or flue which can spell disaster if you decide to light a fire. The smoke will not properly vent and the nest can catch on fire, quickly spreading to the surrounding area.

"Fire prevention is everyone's responsibility. We are here to serve the public 24/7, but we can't be everywhere all the time. You must be part of the equation, our partners in fire and life safety. For more information please visit our website at www.fire.ca.gov or call our office at 530-644-2345 and we can send you FREE of charge, brochures on fire and life safety for you and your entire family" says AEU Unit Chief Kelly Keenan.

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