



**HEADQUARTERS
TOWN OF RANDOLPH
MASSACHUSETTS**

FIRE DEPARTMENT

10 MEMORIAL PARKWAY RANDOLPH, MA 02368-4506

**CHARLES D. FOLEY, JR.
CHIEF OF DEPARTMENT**

**BUSINESS 781-961-0991
FAX 781-961-FIRE (3473)**

For Immediate Release: December 27, 2011
Contact: Charles D. Foley Jr.
CHIEF OF DEPARTMENT
781-961-0991/0992

**CHIEF FOLEY AND STATE FIRE MARSHAL URGE
RESIDENTS TO KEEP WARM, KEEP SAFE THIS WINTER**

**RANDOLPH FIRE DEPARTMENT PROMOTES SIMPLE
WINTER HEATING SAFETY TIPS**

RANDOLPH -- As the temperature continues to drop, Randolph Fire Chief Charles D. Foley Jr. and State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan urge residents to take simple steps to ensure they stay warm and stay safe this winter.

“Winter storms last year left trails of snow, ice, power outages and freezing temperatures, and left all of us struggling to keep warm,” said Chief Foley of the Randolph Fire Department. “As families plan for the winter months, it is more important than ever to practice safety first when heating your home.”

Heating is the second leading cause of fires in the home in Massachusetts. One of every seven space heater fires in the past five years has caused a fire death. December through February are the traditionally the peak months for house fires as the cold weather drives people indoors and there is more use of space heaters.

“Tragedy frequently strikes in winter months where one fifth of fire deaths are caused by heating,” said State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan. “We can’t stress enough the importance of taking precautions with space heaters, like keeping them at least three feet from anything that can burn, as a simple step to safeguard you and your family this winter.”

The Department of Fire Services, along with the Randolph Fire Department, will educate residents about winter fire safety through the ***Keep Warm, Keep Safe*** public awareness campaign. Components will include radio and English/Spanish transit public service announcements, multi-language flyers and brochures, and a grassroots outreach effort led by local fire departments.

Residents often turn to space heaters, pellet stoves, or their fireplace to offset the rising cost of heating fuel. For the most part, these alternative heating devices can be safe. However, there are simple steps you can take to safeguard you and your family this winter.

Space heaters can cause fires if they are placed too close to flammable materials such as drapes, furniture or bedding. Keep anything that can burn three feet away from the space heater and use only heavy-duty extension cords. Install and maintain smoke and carbon monoxide alarms on each floor of your home. Test the alarms once a month and change batteries twice a year. Make sure to check on elderly neighbors regularly in the cold months.

If you heat your home by burning *solid fuels* (coal, firewood, pellets), make sure to dispose ashes properly. Place ashes in a metal container with a lid on it and place away from the house, garage and deck. Have the chimney annually cleaned by a certified professional. Natural gas and fuel oil are both safe and efficient. Make sure to have a professional clean and tune-up your furnace and hot water heater every year. Gas leaks can be poisonous so the gas company adds something to make it smell like rotten eggs. If you suspect a leak, move outdoors and contact the local fire department immediately.

For more information on winter heating and fire safety, visit www.mass.gov/keepwarmkeepsafe or contact your local fire department.

