



Carbon Monoxide & Smoke Detectors - Winter Safety

The Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe Emergency Management Department would like to caution the tribal community again this year to the potential fire and carbon monoxide hazards winter weather situations create. “Unfortunately many of our tribal community members turn to using devices not designed for use as a supplemental heat source thereby placing themselves and others in life threatening situations,” Nelson Andrews Jr Emergency Management Director said. “It is important to maintain fire safety awareness throughout the winter.” Too many preventable fires occur year-round, especially during the winter months. During this time tribal community members should examine heating methods, practice fire escape plans and check smoke detectors. Fires related to home heating are primarily responsible for the increased number of fires during the winter.

The MWT Emergency Management Department stresses the importance of ensuring a home has working **smoke and carbon monoxide alarms** and testing them monthly to ensure they’re in working order. The advance warning these alarms provide can prevent tragedy by giving families enough time to get out of their house alive. ***A partnership between the Red Cross and the EM department has made a substantial amount of smoke and carbon monoxide detectors now available to all members of the tribal community.***

(Please see Red Cross detector contact information below.)

All gasoline and diesel generators create carbon monoxide, a colorless, odorless, tasteless gas that inhibits the body’s ability to absorb oxygen, a condition that can cause serious health problems, and even death, within a matter of minutes. The first symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning usually include headache, lightheadedness, dizziness and unexplained sleepiness.

Tips for winter storm fire safety:

- Use battery operated lanterns or flashlights instead of candles and oil lamps during power outages.
- Keep generators outside of occupied buildings and never run a generator in an attached garage.
- Never use fossil fueled (propane, kerosene or heating oil) space heaters in an enclosed room; these heaters require a well ventilated area to prevent the accumulation of carbon monoxide.
- Keep chimneys, fireplaces and flues clean and never use a liquid fuel or cardboard to start a fire in a woodstove or fireplace.
- Do not use extension cords to power electric space heaters or use any electric heater that has the cord frayed, repaired or improperly replaced.
- Vehicle exhaust fumes contain large quantities of carbon monoxide. Never run a vehicle in a garage. If you are stuck in a vehicle, make sure the exhaust pipe is clear of snow, ice or debris and only run the engine for short periods to maintain warmth in the vehicle.

For free Red Cross smoke and carbon monoxide detector installations and more information concerning winter fire safety and planning for a winter emergency, you should **contact the Mashpee Wampanoag Management Department.**

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