

# NYS Division of Consumer Protection

Paula J. O'Brien, Esq.  
Director, Division of Consumer Protection

October 18, 2021

## Fall and Winter Safety Reminders

### Fall and Winter Safety Reminders

Cooler temperatures are a reminder of fun fall activities and family gatherings for the holidays. However, the fall and winter months also call for extra precautions. The NYS Division of Consumer Protection, in partnership with the Consumer Protection Safety Commission (CPSC), offers these tips to keep you safe.

The CPSC reports that house fires led to an average of over 2,300 deaths, over 10,000 injuries, and \$7B in property damage from 2016-2018. Home fires are common, but also preventable. Carbon monoxide associated with generators and home heating systems accounted for the largest percentage of reported fatalities; there were 808 deaths from 2004 through 2013 due to carbon monoxide poisoning.

We urge you to take preventative measures to reduce the risk and protect yourselves, your families, and your community:

### Fire and Carbon Monoxide Safety Tips

- **Make sure your smoke alarm and carbon monoxide alarms are functioning by testing them once per month.** Both alarms should be battery-operated or have a battery back-up, and batteries should be changed once per year. You should have a *separate* alarm for each to prevent these separate emergencies.
- **Have a smoke alarm and carbon monoxide alarm on every floor, outside sleeping areas and inside bedrooms.** You can check for interconnecting alarms so that one sounds, they all sound.
- **Your smoke alarm doesn't just sound when there is a fire.** Learn the difference between the sounds: **three loud beeps (continuous)** means there is smoke or a fire, and **one "chirp" every 30-60 seconds** means it is time to change the battery.
- **Your smoke alarm must be changed every 10 years.** Make sure you find out how old the smoke alarm is when you move into a new residence. If your smoke alarm continues to "chirp" even after you have replaced the battery, it's time to replace your smoke alarm.
- **Most home fires start in the kitchen.** Make sure you always keep watch over your cooking and that there is a fire extinguisher nearby.
- **Have a fire escape plan and review it with your family.** Make sure plans meet the needs of those with disabilities, children, and those with mobility issues in the household.
- **Know the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning: headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, sleepiness, and confusion.** If you suspect CO poisoning, get outside to fresh air immediately, and then call 911.
- **On average, one of every 13 hotel or motel reports a structure fire each year.** Make sure you are staying at a hotel or motel equipped with smoke alarms and sprinklers, locate the fire exits when you arrive, and review the escape plan with your traveling companions.
- **Have your home heating systems (including chimneys and vents) inspected and serviced annually by a trained service technician.**
- **Never use portable generators inside homes or garages, even if doors and windows are open.** Use generators outside only, at least 20 feet away from your home.

You can find more sources of information for fire prevention and carbon monoxide safety at the Consumer Product Safety Commission (<https://www.cpsc.gov/Safety-Education/Safety-Education-Materials>).

The Division of Consumer Protection offers these tips and more to educate and support New York's consumers. To find more information, go to the Division of Consumer Protection website at: <https://dos.ny.gov/consumer-protection>.

Connect with the Division on social media by following us via Twitter at [@NYSConsumer](https://twitter.com/NYSConsumer) or Facebook at [www.facebook.com/nysconsumer](https://www.facebook.com/nysconsumer).

---

### A Division of Department of State

To cancel your subscription to this E-Bulletin, click on the [unsubscribe](#) link found [here](#).