

1 Real Estate Advisor

Chimney safety

Traditional wood burning fireplaces are still very popular and can be a wonderful feature on any property. However, they represent a unique safety issue for homeowners. Regular maintenance and upkeep are essentially to keeping in home fireplaces stove fully functional, and therefore, fully safe for you and your family. According to FEMA, chimney and stove related accidents account for 36% of residential home fires.

To keep your property and more importantly your family safe while using your traditional fireplace, be sure to follow these simple safety and maintenance tips.

Inspect your chimney at least annually. This ideally will be done by a specialist, but at a minimum you can check to see that there's no debris, animal nests or other obstructions in your chimney.

Keep the area around your fireplace clear of home clutter and remove fireplace waste on a regular basis.

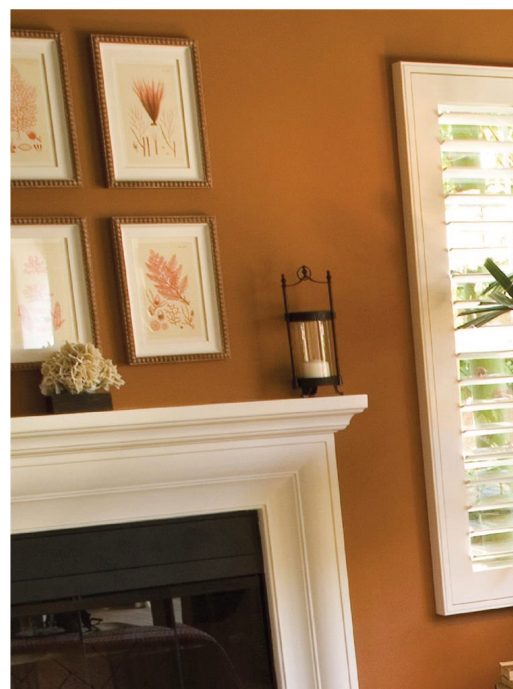
If you haven't done so already, it's a good idea to install an adequate animal guard on your chimney. Birds and squirrels can easily take up residence here, and can cause major problems.

While using your fireplace try to use wood suited for burning. Soft and/or moist wood does not burn as well as dry hardwood. This can cause creosote buildup in your chimney. Creosote is the black oily residue that builds up on the inside of your chimney when woods are burned at low temperatures. Creosote is highly combustible, and can easily cause a chimney fire. Even a little creosote on the inside of your chimney can cause a problem, because the buildup restricts airflow in the chimney, reducing the combustion heat of the fire, causing more creosote to be created.

Never, ever, ever use flammable liquids to start or aid a fire in your home chimney.

Use a fireplace grate to keep embers from coming into the living space. A mesh grate will protect the interior of your home while still allowing adequate air flow to the fire. Do not shut the glass cover on a fireplace when there is a fire. An inadequate air supply will cause the fire to burn at a lower temperature, again creating dangerous creosote.

These simple measures will allow you to enjoy your fireplace for years.



Selling it or smelling it?

Pet odors can be a problem when you're in the process of selling your home. If your house has an odor problem, you should remove any offending furniture or carpets or hire a professional to clean them. Be sure to check the cat box frequently and keep the litter fresh.

Since some people have allergies or fears of certain animals, it's a good idea to put dogs or cats outside or confine your pets to one area when your house is being shown. It's hard for buyers to fully appreciate your home through itchy, watery eyes or in between sneezes! Even if the house is exactly what they want, your chances of selling it are less if the scent of Spot lingers in their memory.



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