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WITH DROPPING TEMPERATURES, GFD WANTS EVERYONE TO STAY WARM SAFELY

Glendale, Ariz. — With temperatures expected to drop into the 40's starting Friday night throughout the Valley, many homeowners will be turning on their heaters and using their fireplaces for the first time since the beginning of the year. The Glendale Fire Department urges everyone to use caution as accidents can occur because of heating equipment.

National statistics show heating equipment is a leading cause of home fires during December, January and February. According to the National Fire Protection Association, in 2009 there were 58,900 heating equipment-related home fires reported to U.S. fire departments, resulting in 480 civilian deaths, 1,520 civilian injuries, and \$1.1 billion in direct property damage.

Fireplace & Space Heater Safety Tips

- * Fireplaces, chimneys, chimney connectors, wood and coal stoves need to be inspected annually by a professional and cleaned regularly.
- * A sturdy chimney screen will keep sparks from flying into the room.
- * Get on the roof and make sure no vines or debris are blocking the chimney opening or are in a position to catch on fire.
- * Space heaters need space. Keep them at least three feet from anything that can burn such as curtains, blankets, clothing and furniture.
- * When buying a new space heater, make sure it has the mark of an independent test lab.
- * When turning a heating device on or off, follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- * When buying heaters, look for devices with automatic shutoff features.
- * Fuel portable kerosene heaters in a well-ventilated area away from flames or other heat sources, and only when the device has cooled completely. Use only the type of kerosene specified by the manufacturer, and never use gasoline.
- * Do not burn holiday wrapping paper in the fireplace because the coating on it could cause a flash fire.