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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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# **Granbury VFD Wants to Help Put a FREEZE on Winter Fires**

**Granbury, Texas** – With freezing temperatures headed to Granbury this weekend, the Granbury Volunteer Fire Department wants to remind everyone to be careful when starting fires or using space heaters.

“More fires happen in the winter months than any other time of year,” said GVFD Chief Matt Hohon. “During the cold months, we spend more time indoors and use different methods to heat our homes.”

“It’s important to keep fire safety in mind when you are heating your home,” he said.

Hohon said there three types of heat sources that are especially exasperating for firefighters at this time of the year, and there are special precautions for each:

### **PORTABLE HEATERS –**

- Make sure the heater has an automatic shut-off, so if it tips over, it shuts off.
- Keep anything that can burn, such as bedding, clothing and curtains at least 3 feet from the heater.
- Plug portable heaters directly into wall outlets. Never use an extension cord or power strip.
- Turn heaters off when at bedtime or when leaving the room.

### **FIREPLACES –**

- Keep a glass or metal screen in front of the fireplace to prevent embers or sparks from jumping out and starting a fire.

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- Do not burn paper in the fireplace or use accelerants like lighter fluid or charcoal lighter fluid.
- Before going to sleep or leaving home, put the fire out completely.
- Put ashes in a metal container with a lid. Store the container outside at least 3 feet from your home.

#### **WOOD STOVES –**

- Have chimneys inspected and cleaned each year by a professional.
- Keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet from the stove.
- Do not burn paper in a wood stove or use accelerants like lighter fluid or charcoal lighter fluid.
- Before going to sleep or leaving home, put fires out completely.

Lastly, the GVFD warns that there is an “invisible killer” that sometimes comes with these and other types of heating sources ... Carbon Monoxide. CO is a colorless, odorless and poisonous gas that kills more than 150 people in the U.S. every year.

Accidental CO poisoning can come from generators or fuel-burning appliances such as furnaces, stoves, water heaters and fireplaces, and breathing CO at high levels can kill you. The GVFD recommends placing CO alarms inside your home to provide an early warning of increasing CO levels. Place alarms in central areas, outside each bedroom, and on every level of your home.

And as always, the GVFD encourages placing smoke alarms on every level of a home, inside bedrooms and outside sleeping areas, and then test them every month. Residents should also have a home fire escape plan and practice those plans at least twice a year.

“Make sure everyone knows how to escape your home if there is a fire,” Hohon emphasized.

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**Facts about home heating fires:**

- From 2013-2015, an average of 45,900 home heating fires occurred in the United States each year. These fires caused an annual average of approximately 205 deaths, 725 injuries and \$506 million in property loss.
- Heating was the second leading cause of home fires after cooking.
- Home heating fires peaked in the early evening hours between 5-9 p.m., with the highest peak between 6-8 p.m. This four-hour period accounted for 29 percent of all home heating fires.
- Home heating fires peaked in January (21 percent) and declined to the lowest point from June to August.
- Confined fires — fires confined to chimneys, flues or fuel burners — accounted for 75 percent of home heating fires.
- Twenty-nine percent of the nonconfined home heating fires — those that spread past the object of origin — happened because the heat source (like a space heater or fireplace) was too close to things that can burn.

*Source:* Heating Fires in Residential Buildings (2013-2015)

For further questions or more information, please contact Granbury Volunteer Fire Department Administrative Assistant Heather Wall at [hwalls@granbury.org](mailto:hwalls@granbury.org) or 817-579-1111. You can also contact Granbury Public Information Officer Alex Southern at [asouthern@granbury.org](mailto:asouthern@granbury.org) or 817-573-6764.

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