

Written by Joseph King  
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**Tampa, Fla. (October 12, 2011)** – In recognition of National Fire Prevention Week the [Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety](#) (IBHS) is providing home and business owners with guidance on the safe use of alternative heating sources.

“Each year, consumers seek ways to save on home heating costs by turning to things such as space heaters, fireplaces and wood or pellet stoves during colder months,” said Julie Rochman, president & CEO of IBHS. “While alternative heating sources can be affordable options, particularly for just one room at a time, if used incorrectly, they also can increase the risk of a house fire. Consumers should exercise great caution and follow all safety procedures when using any heat source.”

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), fires involving heating equipment peak in December, January and February, as do deaths from these fires. Further, in 2009, heating equipment was the second leading cause of all reported home fires and home fire deaths. U.S. fire departments responded to an average of 64,100 heating-related home fires each year between 2005 and 2009, causing an average of 560 deaths, 1,620 injuries, and \$904 million in direct property damage.

“Proper maintenance and use of alternative heating sources is a critical step to reducing fire risk,” Rochman said. “In addition, it is important to have your fireplace, wood or pellet stove professionally cleaned and inspected each year before it is used – and never, ever use kerosene heaters indoors.”

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Prior to using any alternative heating devices, IBHS recommends installation of carbon monoxide detectors in several parts of the house. IBHS' [Alternative Heating Sources](#) web page provides home and business owners with complete guidance on selecting and using alternative heating sources.

For example, IBHS notes that proper placement of an alternate heating source, such as stoves, is essential. Half of all fire deaths attributed to home heating systems resulted from the heating equipment being placed too close to things that can burn, such as upholstered furniture, clothing, mattresses or bedding, according to the NFPA. Stove placement should allow adequate space for installation, maintenance and replacement, flue or vent pipe routing and - most importantly - a safe location relative to combustible materials. Further, protection of the floor or combustible surface under a stove must be addressed.

To arrange an interview with IBHS, contact Joseph King at 813-675-1045/813-442-2845, [jking@ibhs.org](mailto:jking@ibhs.org) or via direct message on Twitter @jsalking.

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### **About IBHS**

*IBHS is an independent, nonprofit, scientific and educational organization supported by the property insurance industry. The organization works to reduce the social and economic effects of natural disasters and other risks to residential and commercial property by conducting research and advocating improved construction, maintenance and preparation practices.*