



City of Madison Fire Department

News Release

Date: January 12, 2009

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Chimney Fire Causes \$50,000 Damage

City of Madison firefighters were dispatched to 508 S. Prospect this morning at 3:08 for a chimney fire.

The owner/occupant of the home reported that he had been awakened by a smoke detector and found a small amount of smoke coming from the floor around the chimney. The man told firefighters he thought was just some smoke seeping from the fireplace, but when he checked again about a half hour later, the room was filled with smoke.

He called 911 and exited the home.

Fire investigators believe the intensity of the fire ignited wood 2 x 4's directly adjacent to the firebox. The fire then broke through to the exterior of the home.

Damages are estimated at \$50,000. No one was injured.

The City of Madison Fire Department reminds residents that using fireplaces and wood burning stoves safely requires these steps:

- Be sure the fireplace or stove is installed properly. Wood stoves should have adequate clearance (36 inches) from combustible surfaces and proper floor support and protection.
- Wood stoves should be of good quality, solid construction, and design. Purchase wood stoves evaluated by a nationally recognized laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL).
- Have the chimney inspected annually and cleaned if necessary, especially if it has not been used for some time.
- Do not use flammable liquids to start or accelerate any fire.
- Keep a glass or metal screen in front of the fireplace opening, to prevent embers or sparks from jumping out, unwanted material from going in, and help prevent the possibility of burns to occupants.
- The stove should be burned hot twice a day for 15-30 minutes to reduce the amount of creosote buildup.
- Don't use excessive amounts of paper to build roaring fires in fireplaces. It is possible to ignite creosote in the chimney by overbuilding the fire.
- Before you go to sleep, be sure your fireplace fire is out. NEVER close your damper with hot ashes in the fireplace. A closed damper will help the fire to heat up again and will force toxic carbon monoxide into the house.
- If synthetic logs are used, follow the directions on the package. NEVER break a synthetic log apart to quicken the fire or use more than one log at a time. They often burn unevenly, releasing higher levels of carbon monoxide.

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