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 **Name of Department Helps You Put A Freeze on Winter Fires**

 *-- Department Shares Tips for Preventing Space Heater Fires at Home --*

**TOWN, N.C. – February XX, 2019** – With the brisk cold in full force, millions of Americans are relying on the convenience of space heaters to warm up a chilly room, and firefighters are bracing for calls. These alternative heating options according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) are a leading cause of house fires.

“Every winter, we hear numerous stories of space-heater related accidents, sometimes with tragic results,” said said Chief Tracy Mosley, North Carolina VWS program manager. “Simple safety procedures can mitigate issues or challenges with indoor heating devices.”

Ranked as the second-leading cause of fires in U.S. homes, space heaters cause an average of 490 civilian deaths each year in 2012-2016. Although these fires are less likely to occur in the overnight hours between midnight and 8 a.m., they account for almost half (48 percent) of the civilian deaths. It’s important to remember to turn off portable heaters when leaving the room or going to bed.

“Put a Freeze on Winter Fires,” an annual campaign run by NFPA and the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), provides a wealth of resources and identifies some simple steps to prevent these destructive fires:

* Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from heating equipment, like the furnace, fireplace, wood stove or portable space heater.
* Have a three-foot “kid-free zone” around home fires and space heaters.
* Never use your oven to heat your home.
* Have a qualified professional install stationary space heating equipment, water heaters or central heating equipment according to the local codes and manufacturer’s instructions.
* Have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year by a qualified professional.
* Remember to turn portable heaters off when leaving the room or going to bed.
* Always use the right kind of fuel, specified by the manufacturer, for fuel burning space heaters.

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* Make sure the fireplace has a sturdy screen to stop embers from flying into the room. Ashes should be cool before putting them in a metal container. Keep the container a safe distance away from your home.

Local volunteer firefighters are counting on residents to help reduce their risk and prevent common space heater fire hazards: Join the name of department.

***Volunteers Needed***

The name of department is currently participating in the North Carolina Volunteer Workforce Solutions (VWS) initiative, a program dedicated to increasing the number of volunteer firefighters throughout the state. More than 70 percent of all fire personnel in North Carolina are volunteers, and the majority of fire departments throughout the state are experiencing a volunteer shortage. Local fire departments need volunteers of all skill levels and abilities, people willing and able to respond to emergencies whenever called.

To volunteer at your local fire department, visit [www.volunteerfirenc.org](http://www.volunteerfirenc.org).

To discover ways that you or your organization can help the campaign to recruit volunteer firefighters, visit [www.weneedfirefighters.org](http://www.weneedfirefighters.org/) or text firefighter to 88799 to be kept up to date about the program.

***About Name of Department***

Department Boilerplate

***About North Carolina Volunteer Workforce Solutions***

A partnership of the [North Carolina Association of Fire Chiefs](https://www.ncafc.com/) (NCAFC) and the [International Association of Fire Chiefs](http://www.iafc.org/) (IAFC), the North Carolina Volunteer Workforce Solutions (NCVWS) campaign is a two-year initiative designed to address the shortage of volunteer firefighters in North Carolina. It is helping achieve a viable and sustainable volunteer firefighter workforce for 15 North Carolina fire departments and associations: Leland Volunteer Fire/Rescue, Guil-Rand Fire Department, City of Cherryville Fire Department, Roanoke Island Volunteer Fire Department, Conover Fire Department, Piney Green Volunteer Fire Department, South Salisbury Fire Department, Eno Fire-Rescue, Advance Fire Department, Gumtree Fire and Rescue, Salem District Volunteer Fire Department, New Hope Fire Department, Wake County Fire Services, Lincoln County Fire-Rescue Association, and the Cumberland County Fire Chiefs Association. NCVWS is funded by a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant awarded to the NCAFC by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to develop a model to enhance the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters.

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