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**For Immediate Release**

### **Inspect and Maintain Your Woodstove and Chimney**

September is the month when temperatures start falling and many Alaskans start building fires in woodstoves or fire places to take the chill out of their homes. Historically, the number one cause of fire fatalities in the month of September over the last five years has been related to equipment failure with woodstoves and chimney fires.

Alaskans can prevent this alarming trend by having their wood stoves and chimneys inspected by a qualified professional before use annually. It is also important to maintain your heating equipment throughout the heating season to insure that it operates safely. The following safety tips can help Alaskans stay safe and warm through this fall and winter season:

- Follow manufacturer’s guidelines when installing new heating equipment.
- Have heating equipment, including the chimney, inspected and cleaned by a qualified professional annually.
- Burn dry seasoned wood only.
- Do not use flammable liquids (gasoline, kerosene, BBQ starter fluid, etc.) to start your fire.
- Do not overload woodstove or fire place with wood.
- Clean chimney monthly with a recommended method if woodstove is used continuously.
- Keep combustibles at least 36 inches away from woodstove or fireplace.
- Keep children away from heating equipment.
- Install and maintain smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in your home.
- Plan and practice your escape in case of a fire.

Alaska State Fire Marshal David Tyler also ads, “Installing a residential fire suppression sprinkler system will insure that you and your loved ones can escape in case of a fire in your home.”

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