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SURVEY SIGNALS CONCERN FOR NORTH METRO FIRE RESCUE

Northglenn/Broomfield, CO—North Metro Fire Rescue is urging residents to use caution when looking for ways to cut costs while addressing winter temperatures. The American Red Cross and National Fire Protection Association released results of a survey early last month that shows the majority (79%) of Americans are concerned about the rising costs of heating their homes, and many (48%) will use an alternative heating source to reduce their bills this winter.

“The peak months for heating-caused fires are typically December through February where you’ll find some of Colorado’s coldest temperatures,” said Wendy Forbes, Public Information Officer for North Metro Fire Rescue District. “Coupled with the economic strains facing families, we are very concerned more families will try alternative heating methods without addressing the associated risks.”

One of the most common heating alternatives is space heaters. Space heaters, whether portable or stationary, account for one-third (32%) of the home heating fires and three-fourths (73%) of home heating fire deaths. North Metro asks its citizens to use caution with space heaters by never placing anything on top or near the device.

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Heaters

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In fact, while a variety of things can occur to cause a heating fire, the top cause is heating equipment (fireplace, furnace, space heater, etc.) too close to things that can burn, such as upholstered furniture, clothing, mattress, or bedding. Proximity of heating equipment by other household items is by far the leading factor contributing to home heating fires (27%) and home heating fire deaths (53%). Fortunately, this cause can be identified and avoided with proactive measures.

Consider some additional recommendations from the National Fire Protection Association when heating your home:

- Have an annual inspection conducted on stoves, fireplaces, and furnaces to check for any mechanical problems.
- Have an annual cleaning conducted on stoves, fireplaces and furnaces—not only will this remove debris that could ignite, but it may also improve the efficiency of your heater and fireplace.
- Use a sturdy fireplace screen. And, give ashes plenty of time to cool before disposal. Place ashes in a metal container, if possible.
- Do not place combustible items near the front of fireplaces.
- NEVER use a stove as a heating device for your home.
- Do not store combustible items near the furnace or hot water heater—leave space around this equipment.
- Space heaters need a minimum of 3-feet around them. Remove any items around the area, never place or rest items on top of the heater, and unplug the heater when you go to bed or leaving the room.
- Kerosene heaters should be fueled in a well-ventilated area after they cool. And, only use the type of fuel specified by the manufacturer in each heating source.

North Metro Fire Rescue is dedicated to your quality care. North Metro Fire Rescue provides fire protection, emergency medical services, hazardous materials response and rescue services to our community. Formed in 1946, the district now covers 63 square miles with a population of approximately 103,000 people including the City and County of Broomfield, the City of Northglenn and unincorporated areas of Boulder, Adams and Jefferson Counties.

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