

B-roll: Fireplace and heater safety critical as temperatures dip

Improper use of space heaters leading cause of house fires

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PHOENIX (Nov. 21, 2018) -- As cooler nights encourage us to turn on the heaters or crank up the fireplace, we should take certain precautions to keep our home and families safe, warn Banner Health safety experts.

“This time of year, around the holidays or when it is getting colder, people are using their fireplaces and using their space heaters and they do catch on fire because people are not watching,” says Tracey Fejt, trauma prevention coordinator at Banner Children’s. “There is a high risk of fire with those and you really have to be careful with them.”

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[The comments of Fejt \(pronounced "fate"\) are available via b-roll](#)

Space heaters, which are used as alternative to centralized heating, are the type of equipment most often involved in home heating equipment fires, figuring in just over two of every five fires, according to the National Fire Protection Association, a national nonprofit safety organization.

Electric space heaters should only be used on flat, steady surfaces and should be three feet away from anything that can catch on fire, Fejt says. They should be plugged directly into the wall socket; people shouldn’t use them with extension cords or power strips.

They must also be turned off when people leave the room or the house.

Fireplace safety tips include:

Fejt is also available for media interviews; please contact media@bannerhealth.com to coordinate interviews

- Before lighting any fire, remove all greens, boughs, papers and other decorations from fireplace area.
- Remember to check to see that the flue is open.
- Use care with “fire salts,” which produce colored flames when thrown on wood fires. They contain heavy metals that can cause intense gastrointestinal irritation and vomiting if eaten. Keep them away from children.
- Don’t hang Christmas stockings from the mantel when the fireplace is in use.
- Always use a screen in front of the fireplace to protect against flying sparks.
- Never use gasoline or any other flammable liquids to start a fire.
- Use only seasoned and dried wood.

- Never leave the fire unattended or let it smolder.
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<http://bannerhealth.mediaroom.com/firesafety>