

Fireplace Safety and Maintenance

Five tips to keep your fireplace safe and operational



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As the temperatures start to take a dive, you might be looking toward your fireplace as a means of warmth on a chilly night. Before you throw some logs on the fire, now is the time to make sure your wood-burning fireplace is operating properly. Arthur Lasky, architect and founder of HearthCabinet Ventless Fireplaces, shares these tips for fireplace maintenance.



1. Wood Preservation

Collect and dry your wood ahead of time then store it away where it won't get wet. Wet wood can create excessive smoke, which not only will make your fires burn out quicker but also fill your house with unwanted excess fumes.



2. Prevent Carbon Monoxide Leaks

Use a chimney cap to prevent water damage, keep animals from nesting, and debris from blocking the chimney. These are all factors that could cause carbon monoxide to flow into the house when the fireplace is back in use. If a cap is missing or damaged, replace it.



3. Chimney Inspection

If you're unsure of how to properly clean your chimney, have a certified chimney sweep inspect and clean the chimney when necessary. While he's there, have him show you how to check it yourself too. The chimney should be checked at least once a year or after about 80 fires.



4. Check for Damage

Make sure to check for damage. In addition to cleaning, a chimney sweep should inspect the structure for cracks, loose bricks, or missing mortar. Chimney liners should also be checked for cracking or deterioration.



5. Keep Embers Where They Belong

Install a spark guard on the front of your fireplace. These mesh metal screens or glass doors will prevent unruly embers from shooting out of the fireplace, which is especially important when the room is unoccupied.