



## **ABINGTON TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT PSA #5**

### **FALL FIRE SAFETY**

**Narrator:** As autumn approaches, it is important to prepare your home and family for cooler weather. The Abington Township Fire Department, along with the National Fire Protection Association, offers the following safety tips so that you can keep your family and property safe this fall.

**Firefighter:** Hello, I'm Walt Blasy with the McKinley Fire Company. To prepare your home for the cool weather ahead, take some time to make sure your heating sources, such as fireplaces, furnaces and portable heaters, are working properly. Have your chimney and fireplace inspected annually by a certified chimney sweep. This professional will check for creosote build-up, cracks, crumbling bricks and obstructions that could lead to fires. When you burn a fire in your fireplace, make sure you use dry, well-seasoned wood in order to prevent fires in your flue. If using synthetic logs, follow the directions on the package and don't break logs apart or use more than one at a time. Before you go to bed, make sure the fire in your fireplace is out. Never close the damper while there are hot ashes in the fireplace – doing so could cause the fire to flare up again and release toxic carbon monoxide. If you have a wood stove, make sure it burns hot twice a day for 15 to 30 minutes to reduce creosote build-up.

You should also have a furnace technician check and clean your unit every year – ask them to examine the walls and ceilings near the furnace and flue to make sure they are not hot. If they are, additional insulation may be needed. Double-check the area around your furnace to make sure it is clear of trash, papers, paint and other items that could catch fire.

**Narrator:** Along with the colder weather, autumn brings falling leaves. While Abington Township prohibits leaf burning, there have been instances of leaf fires in our township during the fall months. Consider the following safety precautions.

**Firefighter:** Never park your car on top of dried leaves – the heat from the car’s undercarriage can sometimes be enough to spark a fire. Better yet, make sure fallen leaves are clear from your driveway, yard and home. Embers from a grill, a tossed cigarette butt, or a spark from a piece of outdoor equipment could easily land on accumulated leaves and start a fire. To protect against such incidents, make sure leaves, sticks and other debris are clear from your home’s cellar windows, chimney, roof, gutters and eaves.

Halloween is another fall tradition that comes with some potential hazards. First, make sure your child’s costume is made from flame-resistant or flame-retardant materials. Avoid billowing or long-trailing features, and make sure masks have eye holes that are large enough for your child to see out of them. Make sure children know to stop, drop and roll if for some reason their costume catches on fire.

When decorating for the season, remember that dried flowers, cornstalks and crepe paper are highly flammable. Keep these items away from open flames and heat sources like light bulbs and heaters. To light jack-o-lanterns, the safest option is to use flashlights or battery-operated candles. If you do use a real candle, use a long fire-place style match or utility lighter to light it and make sure the jack-o-lantern is placed far from anything that can burn. Monitor children at all times when they are around lit jack-o-lanterns.

**Narrator:** Fall is also the time when we set clocks back one hour, and remind residents to replace the batteries in their smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors. If you don’t have them already, make sure smoke detectors are placed in each level of your house. Test them once a month and make sure they are free of dust.

The ATFD appreciates what you do to keep our community safe. If you would like more information about volunteering for the Abington Township Fire Department, please stop by your local fire company or visit our Web site at [www.AbingtonFD.org](http://www.AbingtonFD.org).

