

Is your chimney safe for Santa?

Tuesday 27 November, 2012

Christmas is fast approaching and with the colder weather also arriving, cosy chimney fires are being lit. Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service are encouraging you to check your chimney is clean, safe and swept for Santa's arrival.

Chimney fires can cause serious structural damage to a home, with the risks being even greater if the property has a thatched roof. The damage is not only fire based but also the dirt and smell left from all the soot and smoke, which would affect your personal property, including all your Christmas presents.

Chimneys need to be dirt free to allow the free passage of dangerous combustion gasses, so regular cleaning will remove soot and creosote, and help prevent dangerous chimney fires. Make sure your chimney is swept regularly by a registered chimney sweep.

Sweeping frequencies

Sweeping frequencies below are for guidance only. Frequency will depend on a number of factors including: type of fuel, appliance used, duration of use, moisture content of wood fuel, type of chimney.

- Smokeless coals - at least once a year
- Wood - up to four times a year
- Bituminous coal - twice a year
- Oil - once a year
- Gas once a year

Growing in popularity are wood burning stoves and they also need to be checked regularly to ensure they are safe and clean, ensure wood burners are installed and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Top tips

- always use a fire guard to protect against flying sparks from hot embers
- make sure embers are properly put out before you go to bed or leaving the house
- when burning wood, use dry, seasoned woods only
- never burn cardboard boxes or waste paper
- do not overload the grate
- consider having a carbon monoxide detector fitted as an additional safeguard against the build up of poisonous fumes
- have a working smoke alarm

Smoke alarms

Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service advise you to:

- regularly check your alarm/s by pressing the button
- once a year – change your battery or consider buying a ten-year alarm which will not require frequent battery changes
- once a year – vacuum and wipe the smoke alarm casing to ensure dust isn't blocking the sensor chamber (For mains wired alarms, switch off first).

Top tips on winter safety.

End

For more press information or interviews please contact

Suzie Izzard

t. 01392 872296

m. 07812 148426

sizzard@dsfire.gov.uk

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