



10 Chimney Safety Tips

New Year's Eve Safety

While staying safe on the road must be a high priority for New Year's Eve revellers, it's certainly not the only safety issue that you may confront as you ring in the New Year. However, with a little care and foresight, you can protect yourself from some of the more common New Year's risks. Follow the tips below, and your biggest challenge on New Year's Eve may be remembering all the words to "Auld Lang Syne".

Partying - Ensure you have a designated driver for the night...even better, make arrangements to stay where you are celebrating New Year's Eve. You may be in fine condition, but you don't know about the driver next to you or around the corner.

Champagne Corks - You can avoid eye injuries and broken windows if you follow the advice of the American Academy of Ophthalmology and remember the number 45. That is, you should chill your champagne to at least 45°F, as this will make the cork less likely to pop out unexpectedly, and you should hold the bottle at a 45-degree angle, pointing it away from yourself and others. Then, after removing the wire hood, place a towel over the top of the bottle and grasp the cork. With the bottle in one hand, slowly twist the cork, applying gentle upward pressure. When you feel the cork about to pop out, reverse pressure to a slight downward tilt. If all goes well, you'll have a cork in one hand, a full bottle in the other, and no injuries in sight.

Fireworks - When it comes to explosives, follow the same rules on New Year's Eve that you would any other time of the year: Leave it to the experts. The best way to enjoy fireworks is to watch a public exhibition from a safe distance. If you feel you must light your own fireworks never allow children to handle or light any kind of fireworks.

Firearms - It is a tradition for some to shoot firearms up in the air. This is a very bad idea, especially in populated areas as what goes up, must come down. In 2002 for example, a 9-year-old boy was killed while celebrating Independence Day in Buena Park near Los Angeles from a stray bullet shot into the air.

Have a Safe New Year!

- **1. Get an annual chimney inspection.** Have your chimneys inspected and swept if needed. If the chimney (fireplace & furnace/water heater/flue) is clean and free of obstructions, there is less danger of a chimney fire or carbon monoxide poisoning.
- **2. Free and Clear.** Make sure that the top of the chimney is free and clear of tree branches, ivy, or overhanging branches.
- **3. Cap it.** Have a chimney cap installed on all of the flues. New chimney caps are usually constructed of stainless steel and do not rust. They keep out rain, birds, raccoons, squirrels, leaves and other debris that could obstruct the flow of flue gasses in your chimney.
- **4. The right fuel for the job.** Well seasoned hard wood yields the most Btu's (heat) for your fireplace or wood stove. Wood that has been split and stacked for 6 months out of the rain will be dry enough. Do not burn Christmas trees, pressure treated or painted scrap lumber in your fireplace or wood stove.
- **5. Liquid free light.** Do not use any type of liquid fire starters (lighter fluid, charcoal grill lighter, gasoline, etc.) to start the fire. Only use fire starters specifically designed for fireplaces and wood stoves. Besides the inherent danger of out of control flames inside the home, some of these accelerants can leave residues that may ignite inside the flue (chimney fire).

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10 Chimney Safety Tips (CONT.)

- **6. Keep it clear.** Keep all furniture and combustible furnishings at least 36 inches away from the fireplace or wood stove. Exposure to heat can lower the ignition temperature of combustible items over time, and they can catch fire.
- **7. Screens or doors.** Have a fireplace screen or set of glass doors with a screen in front of your fireplace during operation. Flying sparks from sappy wood can burn holes in your carpet or furniture. Remember, if you have glass doors, they must be open during the operation of your fireplace, do not close them if a fire is burning. The glass is not rated for those temperatures and the fire will be starved for oxygen and may smoke up the home.
- **8. Smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors are a must.** Some of the newer units will detect both smoke and carbon monoxide, but both types should be installed throughout the home. Optimum placement is on the ceiling because that is where the smoke and carbon monoxide will be. Plug in units are convenient but near the floor is not ideal.
- **9. Treat your fire like a toddler, watch them.** Tumbling logs off the grate can knock over a fireplace screen and start a house fire. Do not leave them unattended.
- **10. Pick the right company.** Do your homework on the company you choose to inspect and sweep your fireplace/ furnace flues. What kind of certifications and training do they have? What do on line services like Angie's List and the Consumer's Checkbook say? Ask your friends about their favorite companies.




Slippery Slope: Take Care to Prevent Sledding Injuries


Most people can agree that kids on slippery saucers careening down an icy hill at upwards of 20 miles per hour can be dangerous. According to the Center on Injury Research at Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio, more than 20,000 kids younger than 19 are treated for sledding injuries on average each year. Injuries often occur when the sled hits a stationary object or the child falls off. That's why parents would be wise to purchase sleds that can be controlled with a steering mechanism and brakes.

If you are planning on taking the kids to the local hill, don't just drop them off, especially if they're under age 10. Stick around while they sled, make sure all sledders wear a helmet - sledding injuries often include skull fractures - and be sure to share these important guidelines with them so they can enjoy tobogganing and sledding safely.

- Make sure all equipment is in good condition, free of sharp edges and cracks
- Sled on spacious, gently sloping hills with a level run-off at the end so the sled can safely stop
- Check slopes for bare spots, holes and obstructions, such as fences, rocks, poles or trees
- Do not sled on or around frozen lakes, streams or ponds
- Riders should sit or lay on their back on top of the sled with feet pointing downhill; never sled head first
- Dress warmly, and wear thick gloves or mittens and heavy boots to protect against frostbite and injury



Winter Fun



M	I	T	S	H	O	V	E	L	C	O	M
F	R	E	E	Z	E	B	O	O	S	K	I
L	C	S	K	A	T	E	P	H	L	S	T
A	I	C	E	P	L	C	L	A	K	N	T
K	T	A	X	B	B	O	O	T	S	O	E
E	Q	R	S	L	D	L	W	B	X	W	N
H	A	F	S	L	E	D	C	O	D	L	S

Find these words in the puzzle. Words are hidden → and ↓.

BOOTS	PLOW
COLD	SCARF
FLAKE	SHOVEL
FREEZE	SKATE
HAT	SKI
ICE	SLED
MITTENS	SNOW

