



## South Euclid Fire Department South Euclid, Ohio



### Chimney Fire Safety Tips

Chimney Fires occur at an alarming rate in our country, over 25,000 chimney fires account for over 120 million dollars in damage to property every year. The chimney is one of the least-understood parts of the home. Its job is to safely funnel smoke from the appliance to the outdoors. Chimneys need to be maintained and inspected annually to prevent an unwanted fire from occurring.

- ❑ A common cause of chimney fires is creosote inside the chimney catching fire.  
Creosote is a by-product of burning that coats the inside of your chimney that needs to be removed during regular annual chimney cleaning by chimney sweeps.
- ❑ There are two different types of chimney fires that are quite easy to tell apart:
  - Free Burning: the fires that sound like you have your own freight train or roaring in your chimney. Oftentimes dramatic flames or billowing smoke may lap out of the chimney top.
  - Slow Burning: These undetected fires burn slowly and at high temperatures that can cause more than just structural damage to your chimney, they can easily catch flammable parts of your home on fire as well.
- ❑ **What causes the fire in the first place?**
  - Creosote build-up is the main cause of chimney fires.
  - Creosote comes from particles that were not fully burned during the fire. When the temperature in the chimney lowers particles attach to the chimney walls forming the creosote.

**Facts:**

  - When the temperatures within the chimney are below 250 degrees Fahrenheit, the substance in the smoke will condense and stick to the walls.
  - When the temperature drops below 150 degrees Fahrenheit, the substance again changes form, this time to a dark, sticky substance. This dark sticky and sometimes flaky material can easily catch on fire, and thus is the root cause of the chimney fires.
- ❑ **What to do if a chimney fire happens at your residence.**
  - As with any other type of fire, the first step that should always be taken is to get everyone out of harm's way and call the South Euclid Fire Department.
- ❑ **The Best Ways to Prevent a Chimney Fire**
  - Only burn seasoned or dried out wood
  - Start fires with clean newspaper or dry kindling – Gasoline or kerosene should never be used to start a fire.
  - Never burn cardboard boxes or holiday wrapping paper in your fireplace.
  - Burn large logs, rather than many smaller logs when possible.
  - Get regular chimney inspections and cleanings to remove the excess creosote from the chimney walls and ensure safe burning.

For more information contact the South Euclid Fire Prevention office at (216) 691-4273.