



# Clinton County Health Department

133 Margaret Street, Plattsburgh, New York 12901-2926

“Working Together for a Healthier Community”

www.clintonhealth.org



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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## News Release

Date: February 22, 2022  
For Immediate Release  
Contact: 518-565-4840

### CCHD Program Reminds Residents to Heat Homes Safely

**Clinton County, February 22, 2022.** While the cold winter season hangs on, the Clinton County Health Department (CCHD) is reminding North Country residents to take important safety measures while heating their homes.

“The cold weather brings increased risk of house fires as we use our in-home heating systems more often,” stated Maryann Barto, Public Health Educator in CCHD’s Environmental Health and Safety Division’s Healthy Neighborhoods Program. “Thankfully, there are simple steps that you can take to help prevent these dangers and keep your home safe.”

Decrease risk of house fires by:

- Having heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year by a qualified professional.
- Keeping anything that can burn at least three feet away from heating equipment (i.e. a furnace, fireplace, wood stove, or portable space heater).
- Having a three-foot “kid-free zone” around open fires and space heaters.
- Testing your smoke & carbon monoxide detectors monthly.
- Making and practicing a fire escape plan with your household members.
- Using the proper kind of fuel (specified by the manufacturer) for fuel burning heaters.
- Ensuring the fireplace has a sturdy screen to stop sparks from flying into the room. Ashes should be cool before putting them in a metal container. Keep the container a safe distance away from your home.
- Not using your oven to heat your home.
- Turning off portable heaters when leaving the room or going to bed.
- Checking for recalls on any heating equipment or fire safety products ([www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov)).

In addition to smoke detectors, if your home is heated using wood or fuel burning appliances or you have an attached garage, you should have a carbon monoxide (CO) detector. These detectors should be checked on a monthly basis, the batteries should be changed at least twice a year, and the alarm should be replaced every 10 years. “Ensuring your home has proper working 10 year lithium battery or battery-operated smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors is critical for safety,” explained Ms. Barto. “These items are your first line of defense in the event of a fire or carbon monoxide leak. Working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors greatly reduce a person’s risk of injury or death.”

Households should also have and practice a fire escape plan. “It’s important to review and practice that plan with your family at least twice a year,” urged Ms. Barto. “Ensure children are aware of what to do in case of a fire.



“Persons who have any physical mobility or other needs, call the telephone number above to arrange for accommodations”

Remember to practice staying low and going under the smoke to get to your exit.” Set a safe meeting place, away from the road or driveway; landmarks like a tree or playground set are great meeting places for families with children.

If you have questions regarding heating safety, proper working detectors, need detectors, fire extinguishers, or need assistance in planning an escape plan, please contact a Healthy Neighborhoods Program Educator at 518-565-4870 or visit us on the web at [www.clintonhealth.org/healthyneighborhoods](http://www.clintonhealth.org/healthyneighborhoods).

The Healthy Neighborhoods Program is grant-funded through the NYS Department of Health; the program is designed to improve the personal health, safety and well-being of residents in Clinton County. Program staff visit homes to conduct a health & safety survey to determine the needs of the home and afterward are able to provide free safety products, including smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. The Healthy Neighborhoods Program is open to all Clinton County residents and there are no age or income requirements to participate in the program.

#### **About the Clinton County Health Department:**

**The Health Department is an accredited full service department serving the residents of Clinton County. The Health Department’s Mission is to improve and protect the health, well-being and environment of the people of Clinton County. Visit our website at [www.clintonhealth.org](http://www.clintonhealth.org) or connect with us on Facebook (@clintonhealth), Twitter (@ClintonCountyHD), and Instagram (clintoncountyhealth).**

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