

Message from The City of Ocilla Natural Gas Department

Natural Gas Furnaces

Natural gas furnaces are the appliance of choice for us to heat our homes. They are the most energy efficient with the newer models having an annual fuel-utilization-efficiency up to 97 percent. Natural gas is one of the cleanest fossil fuels and easiest to manage. However, like most mechanical devices, they are not plug-in and forget item. They require regular maintenance and inspections. Safety precautions need to be followed in order to maintain a safe appliance, after all, they are a combustion device that burns a highly flammable gas and its bi-product is odorless Carbon Monoxide.

OUR 5 WINTER FURNACE SAFETY TIPS

We recommend these quick safety guidelines when dealing with these furnaces. (For a complete list of safety items please see your furnace care and maintenance manual.)

1. **Keep Snow away from Intake and Exhaust.** When there is a forecast for deep snow, be cognizant of how high the exterior air intake and exhaust out-take is for your furnace. You do not want snow or ice to block these, and possibly cause carbon monoxide to back-up into the house.
2. **Keep the area around the furnace clean.** This includes vacuuming and sweeping of all debris. It is important to keep flammable lint, saw dust, and flammable vapor away from the area.
3. **Keep children, toys and their play area away from hot furnaces.** Although they may know it is hot and not to touch, that may not prevent a pillow or blanket from falling on the hot surface and catching fire. Keep wet clothes at least 3 feet from the furnace.
4. **Inspect and Change the Filter regularly.** The cleaner the filter, the easier air can pass through it, and the more efficient the furnace will run. Be sure all furnace covers are tight and secure.
5. **Install a Carbon Monoxide/Smoke detector combo unit near the furnace.** Also make sure there is a smoke detector on all livable floors.

Let's not forget about Space Heaters. Remember that portable un-vented space heaters are just a supplemental heat, and not intended to be used as a whole home energy source. Since electricity has a higher operating cost, sometimes it is better (and safer) to just turn the thermostat up a couple degrees.

Also, stoves are not intended for whole home heating sources, the stove can actually cause a fire, so use established and correct heating units for your house.

Also check on all outside water piping to make sure it is covered from freezing. If the pipe is bare cover, it with insulation to help keep it from freezing. And if you have pets make sure they have a warm place to go to get away from the freezing weather.