



## Fireplace Safety Precautions

### Fireplace safety smarts:

- » Remember to open the flue on the fireplace before starting the fire.
- » Equip the fireplace with a metal screen to catch burning embers or shifting logs.
- » Keep combustible objects at least three feet away from any fireplace.
- » If the fireplace is gas operated, be sure to move the gas valve to the “closed” position when not in use.
- » Never use a fireplace for grilling food or burning holiday wrappings.

Masonry chimneys are susceptible to creosote deposit build-up. Creosote is the tarry brown or hard black internal deposits produced by burning wood. When creosote builds up and becomes thick, these deposits can burn long enough to cause a fire within the chimney. A chimney fire can then escalate up to the roof, causing the entire structure to go up in flames! Manufactured fireplace logs create more creosote build-up than natural wood logs.

### Chimney safety and maintenance:

- » Have the chimney flue cleaned annually by a professional. If you live in an apartment, consult with your building manager to ensure this is done regularly.
- » Annually, inspect the chimney for cracks, soundness, obstructions and creosote build-up. If the flue liner has softened, cracked or otherwise deteriorated, it should be replaced, repaired or relined by a qualified contractor.
- » Protect the chimney top with a spark-arrester screen. This should help keep animals out and prevent burning embers from escaping and landing on nearby trees, buildings or landscaping.

For more information about American Family's Loss Control Services, visit [www.amfam.com](http://www.amfam.com)

#### DISCLAIMER

The recommendations printed here follow generally accepted safety standards. Compliance with these recommendations does not guarantee that you will be in conformance with any building code, or federal, state or local regulations regarding safety or fire. Compliance does not ensure the absolute safety of you and your home.