

## Alternative Heat Sources

During severe winter storms, your home heating system could be inoperative for as long as several days. To minimize discomfort and possible health problems during this time, conserve body heat by dressing warmly; find or improvise an alternative heat source, such as a fireplace or electric space heater; confine heating to a single room; and keep safety a foremost consideration. While chances of freezing to death in your home are small, there's a greater danger of death by fire, lack of oxygen or carbon monoxide poisoning.

### Think "Safety First"

Safety is critical in a heating emergency. Follow these precautions:

- Do not burn anything larger than candles inside your home without providing good ventilation to the outside.
- Any type of heater (except electric) should be vented. Connect the stove pipe to a chimney flue if at all possible. Or hook up your stove to the flue entrance of the nonfunctioning furnace pipe. If no other alternative exists, consider extending a stove pipe through a window. Replace the window glass with a metal sheet and run the temporary stove pipe through the metal.
- If you chose a catalytic or unvented heater, cross-ventilate by opening a window an inch on each side of the room. It is better to let in some cold air than to run the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Do not use a gas or electric oven or surface units for heating.
- Do not burn outdoor barbecue materials such as charcoal briquettes inside, even in a fireplace.
- Do not try to use bottled gas in natural gas appliances unless you have converted the appliances for such use. Also, flues and piping made for gas-burning appliances may be unsafe for use with wood heaters.

- Have one person watch for unintentional fires whenever an alternative heat source is used. One person should also stay awake to watch for fire and make sure ventilation is adequate.
- All homes should have battery-operated smoke and CO (carbon monoxide) detectors with alarms installed.
- Keep firefighting materials on-hand.

### Conserve Body Heat

- Put on extra clothing.
- If cold is severe, your bed may be the warmest place. Use extra blankets and coverings to trap body heat; this is an especially good way to keep children warm.
- Farm families might consider taking refuge in a warm livestock barn.

### Find or Improve an Alternative Heat Source

You may have alternative heating resources around your home such as:

- Fireplace, space heater, catalytic camp stove
- Wood, gas or oil heater
- Gas-fired hot water heater

### Provide Fuel

Some common materials that could be used for fuel include:

- Firewood, newspapers, magazines
- Kerosene
- Woodchips, straw, corncobs

Tightly rolled newspapers and magazines can be used as paper "logs." Stack them as you would firewood to allow for air circulation. If the heating situation becomes critical, consider burning wood, including lumber and furniture.

## Heat One Room

Close off all rooms except the one to be heated.  
When choosing a room, consider the following:

- If you're using a vented stove or space heater, select a room with a stove or chimney flue.
- Confine emergency heat to a small area.
- Choose a room on the "warm" side of the house, away from prevailing winds.
- Avoid rooms with large windows or uninsulated walls. Interior bathrooms probably have the lowest air leakage and heat loss. Your basement may be a warm place in cold weather because the earth acts as insulation and cuts heat loss. Isolate the room from the rest of the house by keeping doors closed, hanging bedding or heavy drapes over doorways or putting up temporary partitions of cardboard or plywood.

Make sure you have a backup plan if you can't find a safe way to stay warm. Staying with relatives or going to a designated shelter might be an option.