



# Memphis House Fires Increase As Temperatures Fall



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MEMPHIS, TN - Tonight could be the coldest night of the year. It's supposed to get down in the teens, which means many people will light up fireplaces and turn on space heaters. While those keep you warm, they can also start fires if you aren't careful.

Memphis Fire Department responded to four house fires today. One on the 200 block of West Norwood Avenue is probably a total loss. The owner says he thinks their space heater started the fire. Fortunately, all 8 people inside were able to get out safely, but the owner did hurt his hand. But Memphis Fire Department is trying to raise awareness as the temps fall.

Division Chief Ron Mitchell said, "We do have a lot of problems with space heaters, christmas lights, and extension cords. We do have a lot more potential for fire damage. We do come across people with heaters. Be extremely careful not to hang things above heaters, even though they are keeping you warm, they can cause fires."

Here are some tips to stay safe. Make sure your smoke detectors are working, it's best to check them once a month.

Have emergency numbers posted, so if a fire does start in your home, everyone knows who to call to get help.

Make sure you have a fire escape method, no matter where the fire starts.

Space heaters need space. They need at least 3 feet on all sides. Don't leave them on while you leave the house, or are asleep. You want to keep an eye on kids or pets that might go near the space heater.

Smokers need to be extra careful. Lit cigarettes are the leading cause of fire deaths in the U.S.

Be careful with electric cords. Don't run them under rugs, and make sure you replace them if they are frayed or cracked.

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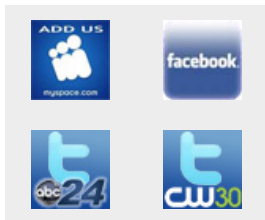
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