AUTUMN SAFETY TIPS

As the air turns cooler and leaves drop from the trees, it's important to keep a few important fall safety tips in mind. With proper precautions and safety awareness, your family can enjoy that crisp autumn weather while avoiding some of the dangers that come with the season.

When the weather turns cold most people spend more time inside their homes using fireplaces, furnaces, and heaters to keep warm. There's nothing quite as cozy as a fire, but it presents some safety hazards. Keep these tips in mind.

- **Service Your Furnace** - Before the cold autumn and winter weather sets in, be sure to call your heating and cooling company to service your furnace. A specialist should inspect the furnace to make sure everything is in working order and that there are no leaks.

- **Use Fireplaces Safely** - Keep that fire in its proper place by using a fireplace screen to keep sparks from flying out of the fireplace. Never leave a burning fire unattended, and make sure a fire in a fireplace is completely out before going to bed.

- **Use Caution with Space Heaters** - A space heater can be an effective way to warm up a chilly room, but it's essential that you read the instructions on the unit before you use it. If your space heater requires venting, make sure you have vented it to the outdoors. Never use your stove or oven to heat your home; only use space heaters that are approved for this purpose. Always allow at least three feet of empty area around space heaters.
• **Reconsider Leaf Burning** - According to information from the Environmental Protection Agency, burning leaves produces dangerous and cancer-causing chemicals. For this reason, homeowners should avoid disposing of leaves this way. If you decide to burn leaves, wear a protective mask. Burning leaves should only be attempted far away from a house or other structures on a homeowner's property. Always check the weather forecast before starting to burn leaves. This activity should not be attempted in windy conditions.

• **Exercise Candle Caution** - Candles are a great way to give a room that warm glow, but they can also cause fires. According to the National Candle Association, almost 10,000 home fires start with improper candle use. Never leave candles burning if you go out or go to sleep and keep your candles away from pets and kids.

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**Change Smoke Alarm Batteries**

Change the batteries in your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors when you turn back your clocks for Daylight Saving Time. Make sure to check the alarms with the new batteries installed. Check and replace any home fire extinguishers that have expired.
Autumn Home Maintenance Safety Tips

Fall is the time for yard clean-ups and readying your house for the cold winter ahead. Keep these safety tips in mind as you work.

- **Look Up Before Pruning Trees** - If you have decided that your yard needs to be spruced up by trimming your trees, be sure to look up and survey the area carefully before you start. Make careful note of where power lines are located before you set up your ladder so that it is positioned away from them.

- **Use Caution on Ladders** - Wearing appropriate footwear is important when using a ladder; shoes or boots may be wet, causing you to slip as you climb the ladder. The ladder should be positioned on a flat surface before use. Be sure that the tools you are using are specifically designed for this purpose and are in good condition before starting work.

- **Clean Up Fallen Leaves** - Keep your driveway and walkway clear of falling leaves. Wet leaves can create a hazard for pedestrians in the fall by making sidewalks slippery. Later in the season, snow may mix with leaves to increase the risk of falling. Homeowners should mulch or rake up fallen leaves and dispose of them according to local bylaws.

By keeping these important fall safety tips in mind, you can be sure you are doing everything you can to protect yourself and your family from seasonal dangers. This will leave your mind free to enjoy the beauty of this glorious season.