



PRESS RELEASE

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## **Fireplace Reminders for Safe Holiday Gatherings**

*Tyler, Texas* – As chilly evenings return and the thought of a crackling fireplace or woodstove warms the mood, keep safety in mind when starting that first fire. The Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association has important safety tips for consumers:

- Make sure the fireplace damper is open.
- Make sure chimneys and vents are clear of creosote build-up or obstructions.
- Clean out ashes from previous wood fires.
- Don't build too big a wood fire.
- Use a fire screen or glass door in front of the fire to prevent room sparks.
- Make sure the area around the fireplace or woodstove is clear of furniture, books, newspapers and other potentially flammable materials like fall and holiday decorations.
- Test smoke detector batteries to ensure proper operation.
- Burn only dry, well-seasoned split logs or manufactured logs. Mix soft woods with hard woods for long-glowing ember beds.
- For gas fireplaces, clean the fan and related air-circulation passages and make sure vents are unobstructed.
- Never burn garbage, charcoal or plastic in the fireplace. Do not burn chemically treated, painted or stained wood from construction sites or driftwood found on the beach
- Never use gasoline or any liquid accelerant to help start a fire.
- Keep small children and pets away from the fireplace.
- Never leave a fire unattended, and make certain it is completely extinguished before going to bed.
- If building a wood fire, keep the fire proportionate to the fireplace size.
- Don't close the damper until the embers have completely stopped burning.
- Always follow your state and local burning regulations and programs.

Specialty hearth products retailers can show homeowners the latest efficient hearth products and answer any safety or maintenance questions. Look for dealers whose technicians are certified by the National Fireplace Institute (NFI), because they have earned the highest designation for installation and service for hearth products.

"NFI certified specialists pay attention to safety and performance when they install a fireplace or hearth appliance and venting system," said Pat Rosengren, Executive Director of SCHPBA, the affiliate covering industry members in Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Mississippi. "To become certified, they are required to pass rigorous training programs in gas, wood burning and pellet hearth systems that are recognized by the industry, as well as by state and local governments."

The Hearth, Patio & Barbecue (HPBA) is the North American industry association for manufacturers, retailers, distributors, representatives, service firms and allied associates for all types of hearth, barbecue, patio appliances, and accessories. The association provides professional member services and industry support in education, statistics, government relations, marketing, and consumer education.

Retailers belonging to the South Central HPBA have special training and experience to provide expert advice on all fireplace needs. To locate retailers, visit [www.schpba.org](http://www.schpba.org) or call 903-533-1674 or e-mail to [kaity@schpba.org](mailto:kaity@schpba.org)

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