



PRESS RELEASE

Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team

For Immediate Release

Dispose of fireplace/wood stove ashes properly at Lake Tahoe

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LAKE TAHOE, Calif./Nev., Nov. 9, 2022 – As the temperatures drop outside, thoughts turn to cozying up in front of a warm indoor fire. When using fireplaces/wood stoves and heating appliances indoors this winter it's very important to remember a few safety tips and precautions. Heating equipment and improper ash disposal are leading causes of home and wildland fires during the fall and winter months.

Keep homes warm and safe this season by following these safety tips:

- Heating equipment, chimneys, fireplaces/wood stoves should be inspected and cleaned by a certified chimney sweep every fall before heating season.
- When cleaning out fireplaces/wood stoves always allow ashes to cool completely before disposing of them. Four days or 96 hours is the minimum recommended cooling period for fireplace/wood stove ashes.
- Place ashes in a covered metal container with a tight-fitting lid. Keep the container at least 10 feet away from the home and other buildings.
- The metal container should be placed away from anything flammable. It should not be placed next to a firewood pile, up against or in the garage, on or under a wooden deck, or under a porch.
- Ashes should never be disposed of in a plastic garbage box or can, a cardboard box or grocery bag that could melt or catch fire. Never use a vacuum cleaner to pick up ashes.
- After sitting for a week in the metal container, check ashes again to be sure they are completely cooled. If so, the ashes are then safe to dispose of or used as compost in your garden.
- Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from a fireplace/wood stove or any other indoor heating appliance and to create a three-foot "kid-free zone."
- Ensure fireplaces/wood stoves have a sturdy screen in place to stop sparks from flying.
- Never leave a fire unattended, particularly when children are present.

Many Fire Districts around the Lake Tahoe Basin have free ash can programs or they can be purchased at hardware stores. Check with your local [Fire District](#) for more information.

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Photo caption: Always dispose of fireplace/wood stove ashes in a metal can with a tight-fitting lid. Photo credit: Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District.

About the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team

The Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team (TFFT) consists of representatives of Tahoe Basin fire agencies, CAL FIRE, Nevada Division of Forestry and related state agencies, University of California and Nevada Cooperative Extensions, the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, the USDA Forest Service, conservation districts from both states, the California Tahoe Conservancy, and the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board. Our Mission is to protect lives, property, and the environment within the Lake Tahoe Basin from wildfire by implementing prioritized fuels reduction projects and engaging the public in becoming a Fire Adapted Community.

For more information about the TFFT, visit www.tahoelivingwithfire.com/about/.