

For Immediate Release**#49-20****NYC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT'S LATEST EPISODE OF 'PREP TALK' REMINDS NEW YORKERS TO EXERCISE CAUTION WITH WINTER SEASON FIRE SAFETY TIPS***#PrepTalkNYC* { [Click to listen to episode 59](#) }

December 21, 2020 — The winter season is officially here, and with it, the threat of snowfall and colder weather. Winter also heightens the risk of fire-related incidents, as individuals are finding ways to stay warm, while others may be decorating for the holidays. 'Tis the season for fire safety. That is the message you will hear from New York City Fire Department's (FDNY) Capt. Michael Kozo on the latest episode of "Prep Talk." As an FDNY veteran with more than 15 years of experience, Kozo shares important fire safety tips during the winter months. A winter don't: never heat homes with a stove or oven. Kozo also advises listeners to make sure the batteries in smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms are changed regularly, at least every six months. Another helpful tip is the placement of space heaters and turning them off while you sleep.

"Space heaters should have a 3-ft buffer of clear space around them and away from anything combustible at all times. One thing that I tell people, and that is highly recommended, is that you run the space heater in the room you are trying to heat while you are still awake. Your heater should not be on while you are asleep," Kozo said. "Once you go to sleep, you should be shutting off and unplugging that space heater, it should not be running all night long while you are sleeping. A lot of people don't like me for that, but that is the safe way to use a space heater."

Winter fire safety awareness is an opportunity to take steps to help safeguard your home. As more people are working remotely during the pandemic, FDNY offers virtual presentations for fire safety to all New Yorkers. Knowing what to do during a fire, and having an emergency plan are also a great way to prepare for an emergency. You can find more information on safety by visiting [FDNY](#).

You can listen to the latest episode on [SoundCloud](#), [iTunes](#), and [Spreaker](#).

Winter weather heating tips

If you lose heat, take measures to trap existing warm air, and safely stay warm until heat returns:

- Insulate your home as much as possible. Hang blankets over windows and doorways and stay in a well-insulated room while power is out.
- Do not heat your home with a stove or oven, charcoal grill, or kerosene, propane, or oil-burning heaters.
- Dress warmly. Wear hats, scarves, gloves, and layered clothing.
- For working fireplaces, use them for heat and light, but be sure to keep the damper open for ventilation.
- Open your faucets to a steady drip so pipes do not freeze.
- Eat. Food provides your body with energy to produce heat and drinking helps you avoid dehydration.
- If the cold persists and your heat is not restored, call family, neighbors, or friends to see if you can stay with them. Remember to have enough face coverings and follow social distance.
- Improper use of portable heating equipment can lead to fire or dangerous levels of carbon monoxide. Take precautions to ensure you are heating your home safely. Do not heat your home with a gas stove or oven, charcoal grill, or kerosene, propane, or oil-burning heaters.

Smoke and Carbon Monoxide (CO) Alarms

- Be sure to have the right type of alarm. Alarms must be approved by Underwriters Laboratories (look for a UL mark) and have an audible end-of-life warning. All new and replacement smoke alarms should have a sealed 10-year battery that is non-replaceable and non-removable.
- Have both a smoke alarm and a CO alarm (or a combination smoke/carbon monoxide alarm). One type of alarm is not a substitute for the other.
- If your alarm still uses removable batteries, be sure to change them twice a year. A great reminder is changing batteries on days clocks are changed for daylight saving time. Replace the alarms with ones that contain sealed 10-year batteries as soon as possible.
- If a CO alarm sounds, you and your family should get out immediately and call 911.
- If a smoke alarm sounds, be sure to execute your escape plan.

General Cold Weather Tips

- During cold weather, wear dry, warm clothing and cover exposed skin. Keep fingertips, earlobes, and noses covered. Wear a hat, hood, scarf, and gloves. Stay alert for signs of hypothermia, like intense shivering or dizziness, and anyone who experiences these symptoms should seek medical attention or call 911.
- Check on family, friends and neighbors who may need help in cold weather — especially older adults or people with disabilities — to make sure they are safe inside and have heat.
- Immediately tell your building superintendent, property manager or owner if you do not have heat. Call 311 if the problem is not fixed quickly and go to a warm place, such as a friend's or family member's home (while maintaining proper physical distance and wearing a face mask). If you stay at home, wear layers of clothing.

For additional safety tips, visit [NYC.gov/Emergency Management](https://nyc.gov/emergencymanagement) and the Health Department's [online infographic](#).

Profile

Capt. Michael Kozo began his career at the New York City Fire Department in 2003 as a firefighter in Jackson Heights, Queens. Following his promotion to lieutenant in 2011, Lt. Kozo worked in the First Fire Division in Lower Manhattan. He joined the FDNY's Fire Safety Education Unit in 2016, where he educates the public with critical lifesaving strategies that focus on fire prevention. In April 2019, Michael was promoted to Captain. Prior to joining FDNY, Kozo was an elementary school teacher.

-30-

MEDIA CONTACT: NYC Emergency Management Press Office (718) 422-4888

STAY CONNECTED: Twitter: @NotifyNYC (emergency notifications)
@nycemergencygmt (emergency preparedness info)
Facebook: /NYCemergencymanagement