



A FIRE I CAN PUT OUT

November is a great time of year in West Michigan. The smell of a fifteen pound turkey roasting with Mom's homemade stuffing while watching the Lions do whatever they do in the Thanksgiving Day game; The traditional day after Thanksgiving journey to every mall and store in the city; The anticipation of Christmas and of that first real cold front which calls for the fireplace to be of service to us once again. Here are a few tips and suggestions to help prepare your furnace and fireplace for winter use.

Fireplaces & Chimneys

Fireplaces and chimneys are similar to all other parts of the home- they need maintenance and cleaning to ensure they work properly. The first step in maintaining your chimney is to evaluate its condition. Look for loose or missing bricks as well as cracks or chips in the mortar. An important part of the chimney that is sometimes overlooked is the top. If you aren't inclined to climb on your roof, call Action Restoration. A cap is valuable in keeping water, small animals and tree debris out of the chimney.

In addition to regular maintenance, an actual cleaning, or chimney sweep is another way to keep your home safe from fire damage. Although some of us still enjoy chopping wood for use in the winter, many have turned to the paper logs. Burning of these types of softwoods can lead to the build up creosote on the chimney liner. Creosote can in turn ignite and cause a chimney fire which could lead to fire in the home. For West Michigan, a chimney sweep is recommended every 4-6 years with moderate use of a fire place.

Furnaces & Heaters

A common mistake with respect to heaters and furnaces is waiting until the first cold front is already upon us before checking and starting your heater or furnace. A simple step which can be performed by all homeowners is changing or cleaning the filters. More than half of the service calls made to heating technicians are caused by simple dust and dirt clogging up vital motor parts. A good rule of thumb is to change disposal filters once a month or cleaning reusable filters every two months. An annual check up is a good idea for either gas or electric furnace. An annual tune up will help to reduce your heating cost by 10%, as well as saving you the discomfort and expense of your heater breaking down in the cold winter months.

Other tips for winter

- Replace or add weather stripping where needed.
- Fix doors & windows before the cold season begins.
- Have your Furnace serviced before the winter rush.
- Use caulking to fix any drafty areas.

So before you get too settled into that easy chair after Thanksgiving dinner, take some time to make sure these helpful tips are implemented in your household.