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The Westchester County Department of Emergency Services in cooperation with the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) announced the release of a report today regarding heating fires in residential buildings. An annual average of 49,100 heating fires occurred in residential buildings from 2002-2004. These fires were responsible for an estimated 125 civilian fire deaths, 575 civilian fire injuries, and \$232 million in property loss.

"Each year an unacceptable number of American citizens lose their lives in heating related fires," said Acting USFA Fire Administrator Charlie Dickinson. "With the winter months quickly approaching, it is important to take the necessary safety precautions to prevent heating fires in the home. Many of these fires can be prevented through proper use and maintenance of heating systems and equipment."

Heating is the second leading cause of all residential building fires (behind cooking fires) and is most prevalent in the winter months when the use of central heating systems, portable heaters, and fireplaces is most common. Over one quarter of residential building heating fires result from improper maintenance of heating equipment, specifically the failure to clean the equipment.

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The report, [Heating Fires in Residential Buildings \(PDF, 2.7 Mb\)](#), was developed by the USFA's National Fire Data Center as part of its Topical Fire Research Series and is based on data from the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) for 2002-2004. The report examines the causes and characteristics of heating fires that occur in residential buildings.