



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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News Release

**MEDIA POINT OF CONTACT**

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**Lavaca County OEM Encourages Heating Safety**

Lavaca County – With temperatures across Lavaca County expected to fall below freezing this weekend, the Lavaca County Office of Emergency Management encourages everyone to practice heating safety. Heating equipment is one of the leading causes of home fire deaths but can be prevented by following a few fire safety precautions.

“Lavaca County is expected to experience a very cold air mass in the next few days, with temperatures below freezing for extended periods of time,” said Lavaca County Emergency Management Coordinator Egon Barthels. “We want everyone to practice heating safety. Proper use of space heaters and other home heating equipment is essential to keeping your family fire-safe and warm during this winter weather event.”

The Lavaca County Office of Emergency Management encourages residents to follow these heating safety tips:

- Place space heaters on solid, flat surfaces. Also, make sure your space heater has an automatic shut off in case it tips over.
- Check space heaters for cracked or damaged cords and plugs.
- Plug space heaters directly into wall outlets, don’t use an extension cord or power strip.

- Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from heating equipment, like the furnace, fireplace, wood stove, or portable space heater.
- Create a “kid-free zone” three feet from open fires and space heaters.
- Never use your oven to heat your home.
- Remember to turn portable heaters off when leaving the room or going to bed.
- Test your smoke alarms monthly.

Half of home heating equipment fires are reported during the months of Dec., Jan., and Feb. Space heaters are the most common cause of home heating equipment fires. Along with practicing home heating safety, the Lavaca County Office of Emergency Management and Hallettsville, Moulton, Shiner, Sweet Home, and Yoakum Fire Departments recommend testing your smoke alarms monthly and creating and practicing a home fire escape plan.

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