



## Fire Safety Tips for the Rural Homeowner

The Rural Fire Association consisting of the five towns surrounding River Falls contract with the City of River Falls to protect citizens of River Falls and surrounding towns from fire and related hazards. As a rural homeowner you are at a greater distance from fire protection and should take every precaution to **prevent** a fire on your property or in your home.

### Brush Fires

- The Town of River Falls requires that you have a burning permit before burning any brush or grass. The Town of River Falls annual burning permit specifies what can be burned and has instructions to be followed before, during and after you burn. Contact an official of the

Town of River Falls for a burning permit and notify the Pierce County Dispatch Center before burning. 715- 273-5051). This will prevent unnecessary costs—**all property fire calls, even false alarms, are currently billed a minimum of \$800.00.**

- Avoid burning on windy days or during dry spells.
- Create a safety zone around your house and buildings. Clear flammable vegetation within at least a 30-foot radius of your home to create a fire-wise landscape.
- Stack firewood away from your home.
- Always have water available.

### Wood stoves

Wood stoves are popular sources of heat in our area. Use yours safely—consider the following factors.

- Don't place the stove in an area of high traffic.
- Keep anything that can catch fire at least 36" from the stove.
- Don't dry clothing over the stove—clothes can fall and ignite.
- Install your stove in accordance with local regulations and those suggested by the manufacturer.

- Ensure proper ventilation in the house.
- Avoid placing ashes near combustible materials before you are certain all burning embers are out.
- Inspect and clean the stove, chimney connector, and chimney at least once a year.
- Check twice monthly for creosote buildup in your chimney connector and chimney.
- Never use or store flammable liquids, especially gasoline, in the vicinity of the stove.
- Burn only seasoned wood. Green wood burns inefficiently and causes a buildup of creosote.
- Be aware of the dangers of CO poisoning, which can occur due to incomplete combustion in your wood stove, furnace, or appliances. CO detectors are available in stores.



## Drive ways

Our community's excellent fire fighting force and equipment will be of no avail to you should your home and/or property be inaccessible to them. Make sure your driveway remains unobstructed! Your driveway should be at least 20' wide to accommodate emergency equipment. It is also necessary to have 13'6" of vertical clearance. Any bridges or culverts in your drive should be approved by the fire department. Turning radius and driveway gradient must also meet with fire department approval.

**Be certain to keep your fire number visible! Teach your children about 911 and how to give the emergency operator directions to your location! Be sure that your fire number faces the road for good visibility.**

## Smoke detectors

The National Fire Alarm Code states that homes must have smoke detectors on every level of the home, including the basement, and outside each sleeping

area. Detectors should be placed on the ceiling at least 4 inches from the nearest wall, or high on the wall, 4-12 inches from the ceiling. This 4-inch minimum is important to keep detectors



out of possible "dead air" spaces because hot air is turbulent and may bounce so much it misses spots near a surface.

- Test your detector at least once a month.
- Replace smoke detector batteries once a year.
- Clean your smoke detector regularly—follow manufacturer's instructions.
- It is also a good idea to have a working Carbon Monoxide (CO) detector in your home.

## Home Fire Drills

Talk with your family about the exits from each room in your house—both doors and windows. Decide on a meeting place outside should a fire occur. **Emphasize: Never go back inside a burning building for any reason!**



## Ambulance Service

The Town also contracts with the City of River Falls for ambulance service. Individuals who use the ambulance service are billed directly by a medical billing service.

