



## ***NEWS RELEASE***

**For Immediate Release**

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### **COMMISSIONER KING: PRACTICE SAFETY WHILE USING HOME HEATING EQUIPMENT**

**ATLANTA** – With the recent cold weather across the majority of Georgia, Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner John F. King is encouraging Georgians to remain vigilant while using home heating equipment. Heating equipment like space heaters and fireplaces can become fire hazards when used improperly.

Heating equipment is a leading cause of home fires in the United States. [Data from the National Fire Prevention Association](#) shows that local fire departments responded to an annual average of 48,530 fires resulting from negligent heater use between 2014 and 2018. These fires resulted in 500 deaths, 1,350 injuries, and \$1.1 billion in property damage.

In recognition of the risk of heating equipment, Commissioner King encourages Georgians to follow the below tips for keeping your family and home safe this winter.

- Have your fireplace or wood stove chimney and chimney connectors inspected and cleaned at the start of the heating season. Failure to clean equipment is the leading factor contributing to home fires.
- Avoid plugging heating equipment into extension cords. This can lead to overheating of the cord, damage to the appliance, and increased risk of fire or electric shock.
- Move anything that can burn (i.e., furniture, bedding, clothing) at least three feet (one meter) away from your heater, fireplace, or wood stove. 54% of [home heating fire deaths](#) were caused by having heating equipment too close to flammable objects.
- Keep your children and pets safely away from your portable or space heater.
- Turn off your portable or space heater before exiting the room or going to bed.
- Never use your oven to heat your home.

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*The mission of the Office Commissioner of Insurance and Safety Fire is to protect Georgia families by providing access to vital insurance products and safe buildings through fair regulation that creates economic opportunities for all Georgians.*