

Is Your Fireplace Safe?

Most folks consider their fireplaces and chimneys to be indestructible parts of their home that require little or no maintenance. While masonry work is generally as close to maintenance-free as you can get, fireplaces and chimneys are more than just works of masonry: they are a part of your home's heating system, which must effectively exhaust fumes from your fireplace, furnace and water heater.

Relatively minor but regular maintenance efforts can help your chimney operate safely for an indefinite period of time. In the U.S., many people are poorly informed about the importance of basic chimney maintenance. This lack of understanding causes a substantial number of preventable deaths and injuries each year.

Beyond the safety issue, neglect of chimneys leads to very expensive major repairs that would not be necessary if the chimney were properly maintained.

The three most serious problems that result from poorly maintained chimneys are:

- Carbon monoxide poisoning
- Chimney fires
- Premature failure of the fireplace and chimney