



40% OF HEATING RELATED HOUSE FIRES START IN THE CHIMNEY



### What Should it Cost?

*The Wall St Journal recently surveyed chimney sweeps in the Northeast, including Boston. Here's what they reported. In Boston a 45 minute cleaning costs \$150; one chimney cleaned in Princeton, NJ cost \$171; Stamford CT it was three chimneys for \$106. So prices vary. Get your own quotes, get a reputable professional and be safe.*

## ✧ Ten Simple Rules ✧

*Clean, well maintained chimneys rarely catch fire. Prevention is the key. Below are a few simple rules to help you have a safe and warm winter.*

- 1) Chimneys require yearly inspections. Cleanings should be done every two years
- 2) Use certified professional chimney sweeps.
- 3) Cracks, loose bricks, mortar deterioration, animal infiltration and debris should be addressed. Consider installing a cap for added protection
- 4) Use seasoned wood from a reputable dealer. (See sidebar on wood) for your fires.
- 5) Don't make a fire that is too hot or too big. Keep it manageable.
- 6) Never use any flammable liquids, wrapping paper or cardboard to start a fire or use when a fire is live. These create 'hot', dangerous fires.
- 7) Use a fire screen. It's smart & safe. Keep logs away from the front and in the rear.
- 8) When cleaning out the fire ash, use a metal container for disposal
- 9) Keep all flammable materials away from the fire. You don't want a secondary fire.
- 10) Have extinguishers nearby. Be sure everyone in your family knows what to do in case of an emergency. A written emergency exit plan is a good idea.



### Wood: Hard vs Soft *There is a big difference.*

Never, ever use unseasoned wood. Burning it could cause creosote build up and left untreated cause a fire. Seasoned wood needs to be dried at least 6 months, longer is better. Wood requires stacking. Air flows between the logs, drying out 80% of the water content. Buy wood from a reputable dealer.

Hardwoods (maple, oak, apple, etc) are best; softwoods (pine, spruce, etc.) should not be used. Roughly, one cord of seasoned hardwood equals 200 gallons of oil.

