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Record-setting Cold Weather Spurs Record-setting Fire Fatalities

(ANCHORAGE, Alaska) – The Alaska Division of Fire and Life Safety urges Alaskans to focus on fire safety during this current cold snap. With record setting low temperatures starting out the New Year, fire departments around the state have been busy responding to vehicle and structure fires. Tragically, three Alaskans have lost their lives in three separate home fires during the first week of 2009. This is the highest number of fire fatalities recorded in the first week of a year since 1996. With the record cold and high heating costs, Alaskans must be more vigilant than ever to assure that their homes are safe from the threat of fire.

Three common causes of fires are:

Unattended cooking- These fires can be prevented by always keeping an eye on what is on or in the stove or other cooking appliance.

Heating system malfunction- These fires can be prevented by ensuring that all heating systems are installed and maintained properly.

Combustibles too close to heat sources- Make sure to keep all combustible materials, such as blankets, furniture and clothing, are kept at least 3 feet away from all heat sources. Especially space heaters!

The Division of Fire and Life Safety offers fire prevention tips on our website at <http://www.dps.state.ak.us/Fire/TEB/burny.aspx>.

Working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms are a priority at any time of year. This is a great time to test your alarms to make sure they are working.

For more information call Mahlon Greene in Palmer at 907-746-5062 or Megan Peters in Anchorage at 907-269-5413.

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