



# Calvert County NEWS

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Calvert County Residents Urged to Exercise Care When Using Fireplaces and Wood Stoves

**PRINCE FREDERICK, Md. – April 6, 2011** – Homeowners are reminded that household chimney fires are often caused by careless or improper use of fireplaces, flues and chimneys and nearly all fires of this nature are preventable.

Modern fireplaces and wood stoves are designed to safely contain fires; the chimney's job is to expel the byproducts of combustion which include smoke, water vapor, gases and unburned wood and other particles. As these substances exit the fireplace or wood stove, condensation can occur and the resulting residue, creosote, can be deposited on the walls lining the chimney. Creosote is highly combustible and, if not cleaned out regularly, can catch fire inside the chimney flue.

The Calvert County Department of Public Safety urges residents to follow the safety suggestions of the Chimney Safety Institute of America when utilizing their fireplaces or wood stoves:

- Use seasoned wood only (seasoned wood has a lower moisture content and deposits less water vapor into the flue);
- Build smaller, hotter fires that burn more completely and produce less smoke;
- Never burn cardboard boxes or trash in your fireplace or wood stove;
- Install stovepipe thermometers to help monitor wood stove flue temperatures;
- Inspect and clean catalytic combustors on a regular basis, where applicable; and
- Have your chimney inspected, cleaned and, when necessary, repaired annually.

For additional information or a list of certified chimney inspectors, residents should visit the Chimney Safety Institute of America online at [www.csia.org](http://www.csia.org).

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*Calvert County is Maryland's smallest county in land area with 213 square miles. It is home to approximately 90,000 people and has one of the highest standards of living in Maryland. Major industries include defense contracting, information technology, tourism, utilities, light manufacturing and administrative services.*