

State of Idaho
DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE

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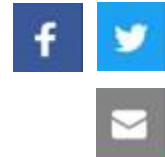
KNUTE SANDAHL
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Idaho Department of Insurance News Release

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Gas Detectors Urged by State Fire Marshal

BOISE, ID (February 2, 2022) – The Idaho State Fire Marshal is urging Idahoans to purchase and install gas detectors at their households. This safety reminder comes as the State Fire Marshal’s Office has investigated an alarming number of propane-related fires and explosions that have resulted in significant injury and deaths – one incident occurring as recently as January 17, 2022.

In all the cases, the occupants were either unaware of the propane leak or disregarded the foul odor that is purposefully mixed with propane. Propane itself is odorless. A chemical known as ethyl mercaptan is added to give propane a foul odor and alert occupants that a leak exists and to act appropriately.

The greatest number of incidents happen in winter, with snow slides and snow removal often being the culprit. Snow builds up on roofs and may slide off during daytime heating, or the homeowner will clear snow from the roof to reduce the risk of collapse. If the propane tank is located on the downside of the roof, snow can accumulate on piping or the propane regulator, causing additional weight on those items and leading to cracks. Homeowners should remember to clear snow away from the regulator and allow it to function properly.

Advances in technology now make available a home propane and natural gas detector that will sound an alarm, alerting the occupants of danger. These devices are available over the internet and big box stores. The cost is relatively low (between \$30-\$75) and some interface with the internet and communicate with cell phones.

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About the Department of Insurance

The Idaho Department of Insurance has been regulating the business of insurance in Idaho since 1901. The mission of the Department is to serve and protect Idahoans by equitably,

effectively and efficiently administering the Idaho Insurance Code and the International Fire Code. For more information, please visit us at doi.idaho.gov or email us at consumeraffairs@doi.idaho.gov.

About the State Fire Marshal

The State Fire Marshal's Office participates in and coordinates an integrated statewide system designed to protect human life from fire and explosions through fire prevention, investigation and public education activities. The program involves fire prevention activities, fire/arson investigation, code enforcement and the operation of the National Fire Incident Reporting System. The State Fire Marshal's Office provides assistance to local fire agencies throughout the state.