

Consumer News

Office of Consumer Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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County of Summit Office of Consumer Affairs Offers Helpful Chimney Sweep and Repair Tips

A wood burning fireplace is an inviting sight this time of year and for many it is an economical way to heat their homes. It is also the season when consumers need to avoid getting burned by a chimney sweep or repair scam. "Having your chimney inspected is just as important as having your furnace and heating systems inspected," said Cynthia Sich, Director of the Office of Consumer Affairs.

Before Hiring A Chimney Sweep or Repair Service

- 1) Obtain more than one estimate and compare them to verify that different contractors are finding the same type of problem with each inspection. Ask for a written contract that details all of the work to be performed.
- 2) Beware of door-to-door salespeople who offer to do a free inspection of your chimney and provide you with a "special deal" to fix a problem they discover.
- 3) Check to see if a chimney sweep is certified by the Chimney Safety Institute of America at <http://www.csia.org> or a member of the National Chimney Sweep Guild at <http://www.ncsg.org>.
- 4) Check to see if complaints have been filed with the Office of Consumer Affairs, the Ohio Attorney General's Office or the Better Business Bureau.



Chimney Safety Tips

- Have your chimney inspected and cleaned regularly, even unused chimneys, to ensure there are no structural problems or obstructions.
- Consider installing a chimney cap which can help prevent water damage and keep animals out of the flue.
- Before lighting a fire, make sure the flue is open and only burn dry, seasoned hardwood in the fireplace. This will cut down on creosote buildup which can clog flues. The National Fire Protection Association says that dirty chimneys cause most chimney and flue fires.

For more information on this or other types of consumer issues, please contact the Office of Consumer Affairs at 330-643-2879, or visit our website at www.co.summit.oh.us/conaffairs.htm.