



## Winter Safety Tips

By Jimmy Hill,  
Fire Marshal, LAFD

LAFD's Fire Marshal Jimmy Hill gives tips on staying safe during the interior heating season.

Fire Marshal Hill says: "Please remember that this is the raining season. We must be prepared for flooding, mudslides and power outages. Please help your family, neighbors and co-workers to learn how to survive the next disaster."

### Space heaters:

- Keep space heaters at least three feet from all combustibles.

### Fireplaces:

*Before using your fireplace:*

- Have your chimney checked by a qualified professional.
- Make sure your fireplace flue is in the open position.
- Make sure a fireplace screen is in front of the fireplace.
- Chimneys should have spark arrestors in place.
- Always allow fireplace ashes to cool down before disposing. Always use a metal container with a tight-fitting lid.
- Never burn trees or newspapers in the fireplace.
- Always dispose of your Christmas tree in the proper container.

### Natural disasters:

- In case of power outages, have flashlights available. Do not use candles.
- Have sandbags, hand tools and plywood ready for use if you live or work in areas that are prone to flooding or mudslides, or had recent brush fires.

### Furnaces:

- *Never* use your oven as a heating source.
- Do not use a hibachi, barbecue or camp stove indoors for heating or cooking.
- Make sure your furnace is working properly. If you smell gas, call 9-1-1.
- Change your furnace filter regularly. If you have any furnace repairs done, make sure they are done by a qualified/licensed technician.
- Have a carbon monoxide detector and smoke alarm in good working condition. Make sure to check the battery monthly.
- Call 9-1-1 if you have any of the following symptoms: headache, dizziness, mental confusion or flu-like symptoms. You might have carbon monoxide poisoning.

### Vehicles:

- Remove your vehicle from the garage before warming the vehicle.

For more information, go to: [www.lafd.com](http://www.lafd.com)

## CITY COUNCIL / MAYOR'S OFFICE

# Tight Budget Brings Cuts

Economic slowdown brings emergency midyear cuts to budget. Shortfall remains.

On Dec. 17, the City Council approved a package of midyear budget cuts totaling \$74 million to address current shortfalls caused largely by the national recession. The cuts are spread across many departments, but a gap of \$17 million remains unbalanced.

Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa has pledged to not suspend his LAPD buildup plan.

The plan approved Dec. 17 was after much debate as to how to trim the budget deficit. The sale of some surplus City properties was taken out of the package, largely the cause for coming up \$17 million short of the cost-cutting goal, according to reports.

The cuts were spread among many departments, most notably Library, the Zoo, LAPD overtime and Personnel, and positions that have grown stagnant under a hiring freeze would not be filled, at least immediately.

The package also seeks to borrow millions to pay for lawsuit settlements.

But the package, such as it is, still does not yet incorporate widespread layoffs, furloughs or other drastic measures that could affect large numbers of City Employees. But, at press time, the mayor was negotiating with

unions to implement a voluntary retirement plan. If the economy worsens, or other factors come into play that weaken the City's budget status, options like widespread layoffs or furloughs could come back into play.

December's emergency cuts are seen as temporary and not significantly addressing the City's longterm debt, expected to be more than \$400 million, according to reports. To ease that kind of debt, one City scenario estimates that approximately 4,000 jobs would have to be eliminated.

One plan by the mayor to cut salary budget would be to eliminate one-fifth of the 48 Emergency Medical Service fire captains who supervise the work of paramedics, according to reports. The department proposed achieving more savings by eliminating four city ambulances staffed by firefighters on overtime, the reports said. Those LAFD negotiations were expected to resume in early 2009.

Wanna be heard? What are your thoughts on the City's current budget woes? Drop us an email: [talkback@cityemployeesclub.com](mailto:talkback@cityemployeesclub.com)



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