

# ***WARNING!***

Do not use a paper bag to dispose of ashes.



***Can Your Ashes!***



# Can Your Ashes

The Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department continuously promotes public safety initiatives concerning the proper disposal of fireplace ashes. The focus is geared toward educating residents of the inherent danger and fire risks from disposing of fireplace ashes in an improper container or location. We ask that you apply our simple message: "Can Your Ashes."

## Proper Fireplace Cleaning Methods

When you clean your fireplace, there are a few things to keep in mind.

1. You should always place discarded fireplace ashes in a sturdy metal container, dampen them with water, and cover the container with a metal lid. **NEVER USE A PAPER BAG**, a cardboard box, or a plastic trash bag in the cleaning process. Never use a vacuum cleaner to pick up ashes.
2. Ashes should be stored in a metal container outside, away from the house, to cool. Your garage, house, or deck are dangerous locations for ashes to cool. After ashes have cooled in a metal container, it is necessary to find a suitable disposal site. **Never dump fireplace ashes until they have had at least four days to cool.** Even after four days, great care should be given in selecting a dump site. Wooded areas should always be avoided.

## Proper Disposal of Fireplace Ashes

Garden areas or flower beds are ideal locations to dump

cooled fireplace ashes, allowing many nutrients to return to the soil. Please survey the area and evaluate any additional hazards before disposing of your cooled ashes. Make sure all dry leaves have been removed from the area before dumping your ashes in either a garden or flower bed that is away from the house, and remember to moisten the area.

## What Can You Do to Help?

The most important contribution you as a resident can make to our campaign is simply to heed our message of prevention and pass it along to family and friends. Our goal is to eliminate this problem in Fairfax County and the Commonwealth of Virginia. Every fire we prevent brings us closer to success. Always remember to "Can Your Ashes."

If you wish to know more about this program, or would like to request this document in an alternative format, please call Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department's Community Risk Reduction office at 703-246-3801, TTY 711, or visit our web site at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fire-ems](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fire-ems)



*A publication of Fairfax County, Virginia*