



Office of Consumer Affairs  
175 S Main St, Suite 209  
Akron, OH 44308 (330) 643-2879  
www.co.summit.oh.us/conaffairs.htm

## **CONSUMER FACTSHEET**

# **Chimney Sweep and Repair Tips**

For many consumers, a wood burning fireplace can be an economical way to heat their homes. It is just as important for those homeowners to have their chimney inspected for safety and efficiency, as it is to have their furnace and heating systems inspected. However, if homeowners are not cautious with chimney inspections, they could be burned by a chimney sweep or repair scam.



## **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.