

1. Chimney Cap/Spark Arrestor- The purpose of a cap with a spark arrestor is to prevent the entry of rain, animals, and debris while freely allowing the exhaust to exit the home through the chimney flue.

2. Chimney Crown Cap -The crown cap is the protective “helmet” to your masonry chimney. Its job is to shed rain, debris and stop cold air from coming down the brickwork of your fireplaces’ chimney.

3. Height- The height of a chimney is a critical element to your home’s heating system. If the chimney top is too close to the roof, sparks can catch nearby combustibles on fire. Chimneys should be at least 10-feet in overall height. Where it projects above the roof, the chimney should be at least 3-feet tall, and at least 2-feet higher than anything within 10-feet.

4. Brick and Mortar- Brick and mortar are used to construct chimneys’ outer walls. Due to time and changing seasons, your brick chimney will develop spalling bricks and require tuck-pointing repairs after a few years.

5. Fireplace Flue Liner- The fireplace flue liner carries exhaust from your fireplace (or furnace flue) to the outdoors. A defective flue liner will hinder the draft of your fireplace and may allow heat, fire, and/or fumes to reach your home.

6. Gas Chimneys for Furnace & Water Heater Flues- Gas furnace and water heaters exhaust through a flue vent similar to the liner in your fireplace. The gas exhaust contains carbon monoxide and is extremely hazardous to your health, and exposure can even be fatal.

7. Flashing-Your chimney’s flashing prevents water from entering your home through the roof. It’s built using a thin layer of sheet metal to protect against rain or moisture. This layer is applied at joints where the chimney meets the roof, shoulder, etc. Loose or leaky flashing causes extensive damage, often without the homeowner noticing. We find water stains on ceilings to be one major sign of chimney leak damage

8. Firestops- Every home’s fireplace system should have firestops built-in. You may not be able to see all firestops but are required to prevent a home fire from passing through a horizontal surface (ceiling, floor, etc.) through the next level.

9. Minimal Clearance- Because the outer surface of chimneys can become hot, the minimum clearance required between the exterior of the chimney and combustible construction is 1-4 inches.

10. Wythe- When a chimney contains more than one flue, a wythe (vertical section of interior masonry wall) should separate the flues from one another.

11. Flue Offsets- If a flue must change directions in its path through a chimney, the offset can not be more than the center of the upper portion exceeding the lower flue’s wall. (nfpa211 7.1.2)

12. Mantel- A decorative shelf added safely above the firebox opening is called the fireplace mantle. It’s one of the most commonly recognizable fireplace features and is one part of the fireplace surround. Mantels must be far enough away from the top of your fire, to avoid overheating.