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Bitter Cold Can Prompt Dangerous Heating Choices

(AP) - The bitter cold weather settling over much of the Midwest and Northeast is unpleasant for most, but life-threatening for some who are willing to do almost anything - even dangerous things - to stay warm.

The U.S. Fire Administration says more than 50,000 residential fires annually are caused by heating, resulting in about 150 deaths. January is the peak month.

People who can't afford to heat their homes, or homeless people huddled in warehouses and abandoned buildings, often take desperate measures to survive. They heat homes with space heaters or huddle around open stoves, or even use candles or kerosene heaters.

Already this winter, several fires in the local area have occurred in buildings where alternative heat sources were used.

Associated Press