

Heart(h) of Safety

BY RYANN BLAKE

In our industry, safety shouldn't just be a box we check—it needs to be the very foundation of our work. And while job site safety like fall protection and ladder precautions are essential and vast topics that must be incorporated into every hearth business, the safety I'm talking about today is homeowner safety. After all, the products we sell and service have the potential for serious consequences—including loss of life and catastrophic property damage.

As burn season ramps up, we know the number of house fires will inevitably rise. That's why this year, my company is making it our mission to bring even more awareness to the importance of safe installations, thorough inspections, and proper use of hearth products.

Whether we're installing a brand-new fireplace or servicing an existing system, our responsibility goes far beyond making something look good and run efficiently. We work in an industry where overlooking a detail or installing something incorrectly can have life-threatening consequences.

That's why thoroughness and knowledge are non-negotiable. Every home is different, every project is unique, and as professionals, it's our job to evaluate each one with a sharp eye and a deep understanding of current safety standards. We're not just providing heat—we're making sure that heat isn't putting lives or property at risk.

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One of the toughest conversations our technicians encounter in the field is bringing safety concerns to a homeowner’s attention. In these situations, hearth professionals often approach that conversation like this: “You have a problem, and it’s going to cost money to fix it.” But that’s the wrong approach. Instead, we should say something like this: “We found something that could put your home or family in danger.” There is a big difference.

Our customers hire us because they trust our expertise. Sometimes they decide not to address the concern immediately, but it’s still our duty to point it out. Avoiding the conversation doesn’t make the problem go away—it just leaves the homeowner in the dark. And when it comes to safety, ignorance isn’t bliss.

At our company, we’re working on training our team not only to recognize hazards, but to communicate them in a way that is clear, respectful, and helpful. We make sure our technicians understand that this is about education, not making another sale.

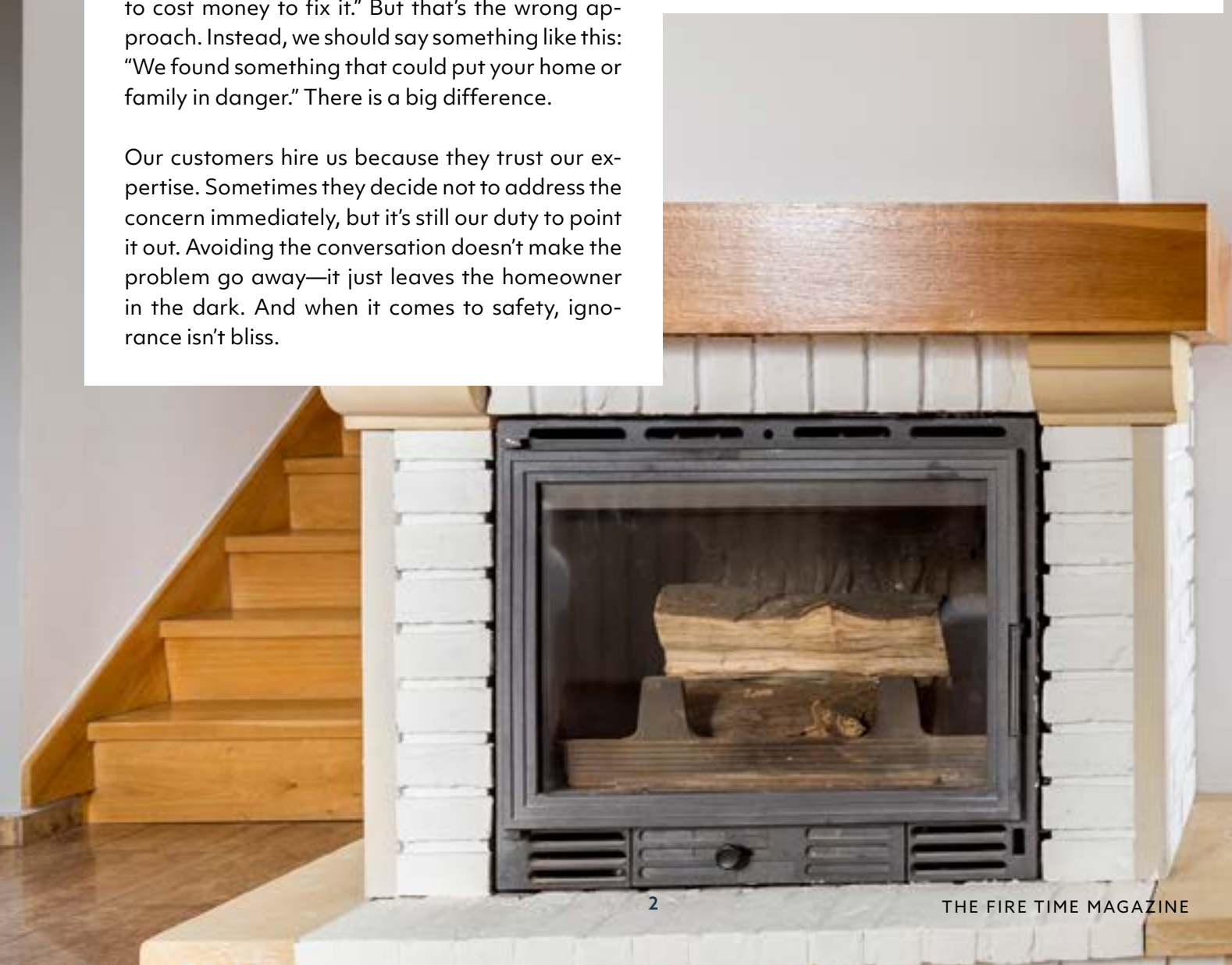
We’ve committed to building our team’s knowledge through industry certifications like NFI and CSIA, as well as manufacturer-specific training for the products we sell. This ensures our entire team is trained to the highest standards. On top of that, we hold a team meeting every morning to review jobs where a technician encountered a safety issue in the field. Bringing the frequency of occurrences to light is eye-opening and helps everyone understand just how commonplace safety issues are. Everyone benefits from real-world examples, and our collective expertise keeps growing.

In short, the more we share and learn, the better we are at protecting the homes and families that trust us.

Yes, our technicians perform potentially dangerous work—climbing roofs, working with gas lines, and handling heavy equipment. But at the heart of it, we’re in the business of providing peace of mind. Sometimes that means telling a homeowner, “Everything is in great shape.” Other times, it means delivering news they’d rather not hear. Either way, we do it because that’s what they hired us to do: Keep them safe.

Every installation, every inspection, every service call—it’s all rooted in the same mission. We’re not just making homes warmer; we’re making them safer.

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