

Holiday Safety Checklist

A fire on any day seems bad, but a fire during the holidays seems to be the worst. Here are some tips to help keep your holidays the safe and joyous time they should be.

The Tree

- If you buy an artificial tree, make sure it's fire-retardant.
- If you buy a fresh tree, have the vendor make a fresh cut an inch from the bottom; this will help the tree drink (thus not becoming a dry fire hazard!).
- Don't buy a tree that is dry and dropping needles. To check for freshness, loosely grip the end of the branch and pull your hand over it. Only a few needles should fall off.
- Make sure your tree stand holds 1 gallon of water, check it daily, and refill as needed.
- If your tree seems wobbly, center it in the stand more securely and redo the bolts or screws. If your tree stand isn't strong enough, buy a larger, stronger one.
- Keep your tree at least three feet from furnaces, radiators, and fireplaces. Try to position it near an outlet so the cords aren't running long distances. Don't place the tree where it can block exits.
- Dispose of real trees when they start to drop needles- don't leave it in your house or garage!

The Lights

- Use only UL-approved lights (mini-lights are the safest, producing the least amount of heat).
- Link no more than 3 strands together.
- Use only indoor lights indoors and only outdoor lights outdoors.
- Check each strand for broken or cracked sockets, loose connections, or frayed wires. If the strand is damaged- throw it away!
- Do not overload wall outlets or extension cords- use a power strip.
- If you're not using the "add-on" socket on a string of lights, fill it with a "child-proof" tab.
- Make sure all outdoor electrical connections are above the ground out of the puddles & snow.
- If tree is metallic, do not use strings of electrical lights!
- Make sure outdoor trees hung with lights are not touching power lines.
- Turn off the lights when you go to sleep or if you leave your home.

Candles

- All candles should be placed in sturdy containers approved for candles
- Candles should be a safe distance from combustibles.
- Make sure you extinguish all candles before you go to bed.

Decorations

- Old decorations that may contain lead (such as old tinsel & icicles), should be discarded.
- Natural decorations (holly berries, mistletoe...) should be kept out of reach of children.
- Breakable ornaments should be placed at the top of the tree, away from pets and children.

- All decorations should be a safe distance away.
- Make sure the flue is open before starting a fire.
- Exercise caution when using "fire salts" which create colored flames.
- Do NOT burn wrapping paper or evergreen boughs. Flash fires could result from the intense burning and jumping sparks.

- Make sure all your smoke detectors have fresh batteries.
- You should have at least one carbon monoxide detector installed.
- Have an operable fire extinguisher readily available.