



FIRE SAFE FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Winter holidays are a time for families and friends to get together. Festive celebrations, flickering lights, and winter greens are hallmarks of the holiday season, but they also present fire risks that can quickly turn this festive time of year into a devastating one. Decorate safely this holiday season to enjoy the beauty of the holiday season while protecting your friends, family, and loved ones.

Holiday Lights

- **Maintain your holiday lights:** Inspect holiday lights for frayed wires, bare spots, gaps in the insulation, broken or cracked sockets, and excessive kinks or wear before they are used.
- **Do not overload electrical outlets:** Do not link more than three light strands, unless the directions specifically indicate it is safe to connect more. Connect strings of lights to an extension cord before plugging the cord into the outlet. Periodically check the wires—they should not be warm to the touch.
- **Do not leave holiday lights on when unattended:** Never leave holiday decorations on unattended. When leaving the house, be sure to turn the Christmas tree off and blow out holiday candles.

Holiday Decorations

- **Use only nonflammable decorations:** All decorations should be nonflammable or flame-retardant and placed away from heat vents. Never put wrapping paper in a fireplace; burning wrapping paper can produce toxic gases.
- **Choose the right artificial tree:** If you are using a metallic or artificial tree, make sure it is flame retardant.

Candle Care

- **Use caution with lit candles:** One-third of home decoration fires are started by candles. Be sure candles are in stable holders and cannot be easily knocked over.
- **Don't leave candles unattended:** Never leave the house with candles burning. Blow out candles before you leave a room and make sure they're extinguished.
- **Never put lit candles on a tree:** Do not go near a holiday tree with an open flame—candles, lighters, or matches.

Finally, as in every season, have a working smoke alarm and portable fire extinguisher (ABC) on every level of the home and develop a home escape plan. Practice fire drills with the entire family.