



Holiday Fire Safety

A Factsheet on Staying Safe During the Holiday Season

Each year fires occurring during the holiday season injure 2,600 individuals and cause over \$930 million in damage. There are simple life-saving steps you can take to ensure a safe and happy holiday.

Winter Holidays

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, holiday trees are involved in about 400 fires annually, resulting in 20 deaths, 70 injuries and an average of more than \$15 million in property loss and damage.

To ensure your happy holidays don't turn into tragedy you need to follow a few extra fire safety precautions. The following information will help you make certain your celebrations are fire safe.

Candles

Candles can help create a festive atmosphere to your celebrations but they can also cause great damage if not used safely. December is the peak month for candle fires.

Always put candles in candlesticks before you light them. Don't use lit candles as decorations on your holiday tree or near flammable decorations and curtains. Never leave candles unattended or within the reach of young children. Extinguish all candles when leaving the room or going to sleep.

Electricity

Cords and plugs are the leading type of equipment involved in the ignition of Christmas trees.

Follow the manufacturer's instructions on how to use tree lights. Any string lights with worn, frayed or broken cords or loose bulbs should not be used. Always unplug tree lights before leaving home or going to sleep.

Holiday Trees

Trees are an important decoration for many holiday celebrations. Keep your tree away from fireplaces, portable and baseboard heaters. Try to keep fresh-cut trees as moist as possible by giving them plenty of water each day.

Dispose of fresh-cut trees before becoming dry to the extent that needles are falling and the color is fading. Contact your garbage disposal service to learn the details of their holiday tree removal program.

Cooking

Unattended cooking is the leading cause of home fires in the U.S. When cooking for holiday visitors, remember to keep an eye on the range. If you must leave the kitchen while preparing food, set a timer or carry a pot holder to remind you that food is cooking.

Fireplaces

Fireplaces can offer a beautiful source of heat when they are cared for properly.

- Make certain that your fireplace is cleaned once a year to remove creosote.
- Always use a screen when using the fireplace to prevent sparks from entering your home.
- Burn only seasoned wood. Never burn wrapping paper, packing materials or other rubbish.
- Wait until the ashes are cool to remove them from the fireplace. Always dispose of them in a non-combustible container.

For More Information

Contact:

Seattle Fire Department
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