



December 2008



Emergency Preparedness Pointers

Safe Holidays Are Happy Holidays

Once again the season is upon us when we gather together to stay warm, cook large meals, enjoy the beauty of candle light and decorate the home with all kinds of pine wreaths/trees, ribbons, lights and other decorations. All of this helps to set the mood for enjoyable holiday times with friends and family. All of it done safely ensures that the holidays remain happy.

Here are some facts and tips from the National Fire Protection Association:

- * During 2002-2005, an average 210 home fires started when Christmas trees ignited. These fires caused an estimated annual average of 24 civilian deaths, 27 civilian injuries and \$13.3 million in direct property damage.
- * During 2005, an estimated 15,600 home structure fires started by candles were reported to local fire departments. These fires resulted in an estimated 150 civilian deaths, 1,270 civilian injuries and an estimated direct property loss of \$539 million.
- * December is the peak time of year for home candle fires.
- * Three in ten home fires start in the kitchen; More than any other place in the home.



Safe Holiday Decorating



- * Use caution with holiday decorations and whenever possible, choose those made with flame-resistant, flame-retardant or noncombustible materials.
- * Keep candles away from decorations and other combustible materials. Do not use candles to decorate Christmas trees.
- * Purchase only lights and electrical decorations bearing the name of an independent testing lab, and follow the manufacturer's instructions for installation and maintenance.
- * Carefully inspect new and previously used light strings and replace damaged items before plugging lights in.
- * Do not overload extension cords.
- * Check your strands of lights to determine the number of strands that may be connected. Connect no more than three strands of push-in bulbs and a maximum of 50 bulbs for screw-in bulbs.
- * Always unplug lights before replacing light bulbs or fuses.
- * Don't mount lights in any way that can damage the wire insulation (i.e. use clips, not nails).
- * Keep children and pets away from light strings and electrical decorations.
- * Turn off all light strings and extinguish candles/lamps before leaving home or going to bed.

Cooking is the number one cause of residential fires in the United States.

The kitchen is a place of comfort, but it can also be a place of danger. Please keep the following tips in mind if you have children or will have children visiting during the holidays.

- * Never leave cooking food unattended.
- * Turn pot and pan handles inward, and put them on the back burner.
- * Pay particular attention to items sitting on tablecloths or placemats so that young children cannot pull hot food or liquid down and scald themselves.
- * Supervise children carefully and give them age appropriate tasks if they are helping you cook.



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