

Winter and Holiday Season Fire Safety Advice

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Follow this advice from the Sussex County Firemen's Association to reduce the risk of fire in and around your home.



Winter and Holiday Season Fire Safety Advice

During an average winter holiday season, 400 Americans lose their life to fires and an additional 1,650+ are injured. By paying attention and practicing the following advice, you can reduce those risks in and around your home.

HOLIDAY TREES Fresh trees should have green needles which are hard to pull back from branches, and needles should not break if the tree has been freshly cut. Tree trunks should be sticky to the touch. If needles fall from the tree easily, the tree is not fresh. Do not place trees too close to a heat source since the heat will dry out the tree quickly. Live trees should not be up for more than two weeks. Tree stands should be filled with water at all times. Place your holiday trees out of the way so as to not block doorways. Large trees should be secured to walls or ceilings to prevent them from falling.

HOLIDAY LIGHTS Holiday lights should be thoroughly inspected each year prior to placement. Always check for broken sockets, wear, frayed wires, etc. prior to use. It is recommended not to connect more than three strands of holiday lights together unless directions state otherwise. Holiday lights should never be warm to the touch. Holiday lights should always be identified with an ETL, UL or CSA label - meaning they have been tested for safety.

CANDLES Never burn candles near evergreens. Never leave home or go to bed with candles burning. Always make sure that candles are in a stable base to prevent them from falling over and starting a larger fire.

INDOOR SAFETY FOR PETS When Holly is ingested, it could cause pets to suffer nausea and diarrhea. Mistletoe can cause gastrointestinal upset and cardiovascular problems. Many varieties of lilies may cause kidney failure in cats if ingested.

PORTABLE SPACE HEATERS Portable space heaters need space. These units need a 3' clearance from anything combustible and should always be turned off when leaving a room or when you go to sleep.

WOOD STOVES AND FIREPLACES Have chimneys cleaned annually to assure they are free of soot and creosote build-up and to be certain that there are no cracks that could lead to fires. Burn only well-seasoned hardwoods. Trash, cardboard or wrapping paper should never be burned in woodstoves or chimneys because they burn unevenly and may contain poisons or cause a house fire. Any ashes removed, should always be placed in a metal can and removed from inside your house - never to be left on a porch or close to the outside of the house since ashes can stay hot for up to a week.

SMOKE DETECTORS AND CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detectors should be checked for proper operation. These items may save lives. Always be sure that batteries are fresh in your units. At least one CO detector should be placed near sleeping areas.

Be safe this winter and enjoy your holidays!

Submitted by:

Sussex County Firemen's Association