

ACCESSING SAFETY KNOWLEDGE (ASK) SHEET: WINTER HOLIDAY SAFETY IN THE HOME

Fire and Electrical Safety

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), each year U.S. fire departments respond to an average of 230 home fires that start with Christmas trees. Electrical failures or malfunctions are a factor in 1/3 of all Christmas tree fires. A little safety can go a long way for keeping the “happy” in your holidays!

1. Turn off the electricity to the supply outlet before working on outdoor wiring.
2. Clean your chimney. Dirty chimneys can cause chimney fires.
3. Install smoke alarms on every level of your home and outside each sleeping area.
4. Always have a working fire extinguisher in the house and keep it easily accessible.
5. Holiday Lights:
 - a. Make sure your outdoor lights are meant for outdoor use;
 - b. Purchase lights that have a label from a recognized testing laboratory, and follow instructions on cord labels regarding connecting lights strings and extension cords;
 - c. Follow labeling for number of light sets which can be connected end-to-end;
 - d. Discard any string of lights with frayed cords, cracked lamp holders or loose connection.
 - e. Turn off all indoor and outdoor lights before you go to bed.
6. Candles:
 - a. Place candles on steady, non-flammable surfaces and away from curtains and other flammable items.
 - b. Keep candles out of reach of children and pets.
 - c. Blow candles out when you leave the room.
7. With all the holiday cheer, don't get distracted and leave cooking food unattended.
8. Keep trees away from heat sources like radiators and fireplaces.
9. Don't overload electrical circuits or extension cords.



Decorating

Decorating is one of the best ways to get in a holiday mood, but emergency rooms see thousands of injuries involving holiday decorating every season.

10. Be careful when getting decorations out of a low attic. Watch for exposed nails, wires, low-hanging rafters or cross beams. Be aware that openings between truss chords can present a fall hazard.
11. Before setting up the tree inside, trim two inches off the stem diagonally so it can absorb water. Add water each day to ensure the tree is well watered.

Miscellaneous

12. Don't drink and drive. Santa would call a cab or shareride (Uber, Lyft)!
13. Keep sidewalks and steps shoveled and de-iced to prevent slips and falls.
14. Festive favorites can seriously harm your pets.
 - a. A cat might see shiny tinsel as a toy, but a single strand can become tangled in his intestines, causing serious damage.
 - b. Holly, mistletoe, and poinsettias are toxic to dogs and cats when ingested. And as for candy canes (the real ones, not the dog-toy variety), their curvy shape and wrapper can be a choking hazard, and sugar-free ones made with xylitol are poisonous to dogs.