



Holiday Fire Prevention Tips

General Rules

- Test your smoke detectors monthly and replace the batteries at least twice a year.
- Keep matches, lighters, candles, decorative lights and electrical decorations out of the reach of children.
- Have an emergency escape plan. PRACTICE THE PLAN!
- Keep a fire extinguisher on hand.

Lights and Candles

- Never use candles on a Christmas tree.
- Place candles where they will not be knocked down.
- Keep lights or candles away from anything that could easily catch fire.
- Always use non-flammable holders, Kinara, Advent wreaths, and Menorahs.
- Never leave holiday lights or candles unattended.
- Inspect all lights and cords before using them. Discard all lights with cracked or broken wiring.
- Use only UL or FM approved lights and never overload circuits

Christmas Trees

Christmas trees are a part of the traditional holiday celebration. If not handled properly, they can cause an extremely dangerous fire threat. A dried out tree can catch fire and burn a living room in just 30 seconds.

- When buying a live tree, look for one that is not shedding needles. If branches snap when bent, the tree is already too dry.
- Keep trees watered. A mixture of lemon-lime soda and water will keep a tree moist longer.
- Keep trees away from all heat sources including fireplaces, room heaters or potbelly stoves.
- When purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label "Fire Resistant."
- Secure the tree in the stand to keep it from toppling.
- When the tree becomes dry, discard it promptly.

Holiday Decorations

- Keep wrapping paper and ribbons away from heat sources. This includes candles lights, stoves and heaters.
- Holly and mistletoe are poisonous. Keep them away from children.
- Wrapping paper and ribbon should be thrown away in trash containers, not fireplaces. Burning paper and ribbon could cause a chimney fire.
- Put decorations high enough on the tree so your child or pet can't reach them. Children can choke or cut themselves on ornaments, ornament hangers or tinsel and can be poisoned by older painted ornaments that contain lead.

Electrical Outlets

- There is often a tendency to overload wall outlets during the holiday season. This is an unsafe practice and should be avoided even for short durations.
- Inspect all cords before using. Look for loose connections or frayed or exposed wire. Discard any defective cords.
- Use only cords that are certified by an independent testing laboratory. Consult your supplier and read the labels and manufacturer's instructions to ensure proper use.
- Insert plugs fully into outlets. Poor contact may cause overheating or produce shock.
- To avoid possible overheating, do not coil or bunch an extension cord which is in use and do not run it under carpets or rugs.

Kitchen Safety

- Start the holidays with a clean stove and oven.
- Keep the kitchen off limits to young children.
- When cooking, do not wear clothing with loose sleeves or dangling jewelry.
- Cook on the back burners when possible and turn pot handles in so they don't extend over the edge of the stove.
- Never leave cooking unattended. If you must leave the kitchen while cooking, turn off the stove or have someone else watch what is cooking.
- Grease and fat fires are one of the leading causes of home fires, so be extra careful when doing this kind of cooking. Here's what to do if grease in a pot or pan catches fire
 - Smother the flames by covering the pan with a lid.
 - Turn off the heat immediately.
 - Use baking soda on shallow grease fires.
 - Never turn on the overhead fan, as this could spread the fire.
 - Never throw water on a grease fire.

Fireplace Safety

- Check and clean the fireplace and chimney every year.
- Make sure the fire you build "fits" your fireplace. Do not overload it with too many logs.
- Always use a fireplace screen.
- NEVER use gasoline, lighter fluid or kerosene to start a fire.
- Remove ashes in a metal container. Never store them in the house.
- Use care with "fire salts" which produce colored flames when thrown on wood fires. They contain heavy metals that can cause intense gastrointestinal irritation and vomiting if eaten. Keep them away from children.
- NEVER leave a fire unattended. Make sure it is out before you leave the house or go to bed.

IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY DONE SO, PLEASE CHANGE YOUR BATTERIES IN YOUR SMOKE AND CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS

For more information regarding home and fire safety, visit our website
www.grandrapidsfd.com