

Holiday Safety

There is no place like home for the holidays and no place like home for incidents involving fire, falls, electrocution and other types of accidents during the holiday season. Below are some standard guidelines for holiday safety.

Trees

When buying a Christmas tree, make sure the needles have not dried out. Bounce it on the ground several times. If it loses a lot of needles, look for another tree.

When using evergreen boughs, the same precaution should be followed as with trees.

Recut the tree trunk 1"–3" from the bottom so it can absorb water more easily.

Keep the tree outside, in water, until you are ready to set it up. Keep it watered while in use.

Have the tree sprayed with a fire retardant material.

Do not place tree near stairways, in doorways, exits, hallways or any other location where the tree, if standing or fallen, would block an escape route.

Keep fresh pine boughs or trees far away from any heat sources such as portable heaters, fireplaces or candles, as well as electrical equipment.

As soon as the needles begin to fall, dispose of the tree.

When using an artificial tree, make sure it is marked "flame retardant."

Never use electric lights on a metallic tree.

Lights and Candles

Avoid lighted candles, if possible. Keep them away from flammable areas, and never put them on or near a tree.

Do not display burning candles in windows or near exits.

Keep all candles and matches out of the reach of children.

Any electric lights should be UL listed and in good condition. This is true of extension cords as well.

Avoid extension cords. If a cord is necessary, use heavy gauge cord. Place extension cords in view. Do not hide them under rugs, drapes or furniture.

There's No Place Like Home For Holiday Accidents

Do not use outdoor lights inside the house.

Do not use indoor lights outside the house.

Limit bulb size to a smaller type that does not produce large amounts of heat.

Use only decorative lights approved for the specified use you have in mind.

Check lights before using and replace broken or cracked sockets or bulbs.

Don't overload an electric circuit with appliances.

Avoid keeping the decorative lights on for extended periods of time. Unplug them when you go to bed.

Look for frayed or bare wire, loose connections or damaged plugs. Discard any damaged light sets.

Decorations

Use only nonflammable decorations if possible.

No flammable decorations should be used around doors or hallways, or in exits.

Don't use sprinkler pipes or heads as hangers for decorations.

Odds and Ends

Make sure your smoke detectors have fresh batteries.

Disallow smoking around decorations and trees.

Clean up accumulated gift paper, ribbons and boxes before they become a fire hazard.

After holiday parties, make sure all cigarette butts are completely out before cleaning out ashtrays. Then inspect furniture cushions for dropped cigarette butts. They can smolder for hours before igniting.

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