

**The Fire Department wants you to have**  
**Fire Safe Holidays Fire Safety Tips**  
**For a Safe and Festive Holiday Season**

For most of us, the holiday season represents a time for family festivities and good cheer. The holiday season is a time when there is an increased risk of home fires. Many households engage in holiday activities that may increase the incidence of a home fire. Cooking, Christmas trees, candle usage and holiday decorating all significantly contribute to the seasonal causes of home fires. Add to that the hectic nature of the holidays, when people are trying to accomplish multiple tasks at one time and the chance for home fires grows even more. As everyone gets busier during the holidays, we often become rushed, distracted or tired, that's when fires are more likely to occur.

Fortunately, with a little added awareness and some minor adjustments to holiday cooking and decorating, the season can remain festive *and* safe for everybody.

Here are some steps to take to prevent holiday fires.

With unattended cooking as the leading cause of U.S. home fires and home fire injuries, stay in the kitchen while you're frying, grilling, boiling, or broiling food. Most cooking fires involve the stovetop, so keep anything that can catch fire away from it, and turn off the stove when you leave the kitchen, even if it's for a short period of time. If you're simmering, baking or roasting food, check it regularly and use a timer to remind you that you're cooking. Create a "kid-free zone" of at least three feet around the stove and areas where hot food and drinks are prepared or carried.

Candles are widely used in homes throughout the holidays, and December is the peak month for candle caused fires. The National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) statistics show that two of every five home decoration fires are started by candles. Consider using flameless candles, which look and smell like real candles. However, if you do use traditional candles, keep them at least 12" away from anything that can burn, and remember to blow them out when you leave the room or go to bed. Use candle holders that are sturdy, won't tip over and are placed on uncluttered surfaces. Avoid using candles in the bedroom where more than one-third of U.S. candle fires begin or other areas where people may fall asleep. Lastly, never leave a child or pet alone in a room with a burning candle.

According to NFPA, U.S. fire departments respond to an average of 210 home structure fires caused by Christmas trees per year. Three of every ten of them is caused by electrical problems and one in four result from a heat source that's too close to the tree.

When picking, placing and lighting the tree, consider the following:

- If you have an artificial tree, be sure it's labeled, certified or identified by the manufacturer as fire-retardant.
- If you choose a fresh tree, make sure the green needles don't fall off when touched; before placing it in the stand, cut 2" from the base of the trunk. Add water to the tree stand, and be sure to water it daily.
- Make sure the tree is not blocking an exit, and is at least three feet away from any heat source, like fireplaces, space heaters, radiators, candles and heat vents or lights.
- Use lights that have the label of a recognized testing laboratory, and make sure you know whether they are designed for indoor or outdoor use.
- Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords, or loose bulb connections. Read manufacturer's instructions for number of light strands to connect.
- Never use lit candles to decorate the tree.
- Always turn off Christmas tree lights before leaving the home or going to bed.
- After Christmas, get rid of the tree. Dried-out trees are a fire hazard and should not be left in the home or garage, or placed outside the home.
- Bring outdoor electrical lights inside after the holidays to prevent hazards and make them last longer.

By following these fire prevention tips and measures, you can greatly reduce the risk of fire in your home, and enjoy a safe holiday season. The holidays can quickly turn from joyful to tragic when a fire occurs. By taking simple precautions, we can avoid potential fire hazards, and make this time of year a healthy and happy one. Pleasant Grove Fire Department wishes you a safe and happy holidays.