



December 2020

Tips to Keep Your Family and Friends Safe During the Holidays

First, Happy Holidays to all! This holiday season has a few more dangers than those in the past given the COVID-19 situation, and we urge everyone to be safe in their day to day activities and follow established safety guidelines. When it comes to your home and some of the normal dangers we face during the holidays we still need to be vigilant, below you will find a few suggestions that will help you have a safe and happy holiday season.

- If you have a house full of guest or just a few, make sure your decorations and party favors don't clutter your paths of egress, you want everyone to get out safely in case of emergency.
- If you have folks staying the night, sleeping in parts of your home that may not be protected by smoke detectors, buy a few portable battery-operated detectors, and make sure everyone has a direct path out of the house.
- This is the time of year that electrical circuits can become overloaded with all the temporary lighting, cooking, and other holiday activity. Overloaded circuits and faulty wiring are a common cause of holiday fires. Be diligent that you don't exceed the receptacle load capacity. If a breaker trips or a fuse blows, reduce the electrical load on the circuit before turning the breaker back on or replacing the fuse.
- Be careful with extension cords, they can become pinched under furniture or by other means. When pinched the insulation value of the conductor is severely diminished, this will cause a hotspot and possible fire.
- Extension cords are also trip hazards, keep them running along walls, not across floors or under rugs.
- Keep decorations and other household items at least three feet from a heat source such as a fireplace or space heater.
- While cooking your holiday dishes, keep a close eye on your cooking appliances; unattended cooking appliances are the leading cause of home cooking fires.
- When you leave your home, or go to sleep for the night, turn off all your holiday lighting. If there is no one home or awake, things can get out of hand quickly if circuits overload.
- Never leave a lighted candle unattended.

- I know we say this every year, but it is so important if you have a natural Christmas tree or other vegetation, keep it watered! These can become kindling and so easy to combust if dried.

There are many other safety points, but one of the most important is just be vigilant, be aware of the special situations the holidays bring. So, be safe and have a happy holiday season.

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