



Holiday Safety Tips

The holiday season can bring great joy and excitement to families around the valley. Whether you are celebrating Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa or New Year's, follow these guidelines for a safe and happy holiday.

General Rules

- ❖ **T**est your smoke detectors monthly and replace the batteries at least twice a year.
- ❖ **K**eeP matches, lighters, candles, decorative lights and electrical decorations out of the reach of children.
- ❖ **H**ave an emergency escape plan. **PRACTICE THE PLAN!**
- ❖ **K**eeP a fire extinguisher on hand.

Lights and Candles

- ❖ **N**ever use candles on a Christmas tree.
- ❖ **P**lace candles where they will not be knocked down.
- ❖ **K**eeP lights or candles away from anything that could easily catch fire.
- ❖ **A**lways use non-flammable holders, Kinara, Advent wreaths, and Menorahs.
- ❖ **N**ever leave holiday lights or candles unattended.
- ❖ **I**nspect all lights and cords before using them. Discard all lights with cracked or broken wiring.
- ❖ **U**se 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.

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

Holiday Decorations

- ❖ **K**eep wrapping paper and ribbons away from heat sources. This includes candles, lights, stoves and heaters.
- ❖ **H**olly and mistletoe are poisonous. Keep them away from children.
- ❖ **W**rapping paper and ribbon should be thrown away in trash containers, not fireplaces. Burning paper and ribbon could cause a chimney fire.
- ❖ **P**ut 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.

Kitchen Safety

- ❖ **S**tart the holidays with a clean stove and oven.
- ❖ **K**eep the kitchen off limits to young children.
- ❖ **W**hen cooking, do not wear clothing with loose sleeves or dangling jewelry.
- ❖ **C**ook on the back burners when possible and turn pot handles in so they don't extend over the edge of the stove.
- ❖ **N**ever leave cooking unattended. If you must leave the kitchen while cooking, turn off the stove or have someone else watch what is cooking.

Fireplace Safety

- ❖ **C**heck and clean the fireplace and chimney every year.
- ❖ **M**ake sure the fire you build "fits" your fireplace. Do not overload it with too many logs.
- ❖ **A**lways use a fireplace screen.
- ❖ **N**EVER use gasoline, lighter fluid or kerosene to start a fire.
- ❖ **R**emove ashes in a metal container. Never store them in the house.
- ❖ **U**se 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.
- ❖ **N**EVER leave a fire unattended. Make sure it is out before you leave the house or go to bed.

**Remember, there is no substitute for common sense.
Look for and eliminate potential danger spots.**

Have a safe and happy holiday season!

