



Heating and Holiday Decoration Safety for Your Home

Heating, holiday decorations, and candles all contribute to an increased risk of fire during the winter months. We would like to help our residents reduce the risk of winter fires and electrical fires by providing some safety information.

If you are decorating for the holidays, choose decorations that are flame resistant or flame retardant. Some lights are only for indoor or outdoor use, make sure you know which light set goes where! Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Read manufacturer's instructions for the number of light strands to connect. Use clips, not nails, to hang lights so the cords do not get damaged. Do not overload electrical outlets or extension cords. December is the peak time of year for home candle fires; the top two days for home candle fires are Christmas and Christmas Eve. If you use candles, keep them at least 12 inches from anything that can burn. Be sure to blow out all candles before you leave the room or go to bed! Think about using flameless or electric candles in your home instead of real candles. If you are going to use a live Christmas tree, get one with fresh, green needles that do not fall off when touched. Be sure to cut 2" from the base of the trunk when you set it up and put it at least three feet away from any heat source, like fireplaces, radiators, candles, heat vents, or lights. Make sure the tree is not blocking an exit and most importantly, water it daily. Never use lit candles to decorate the tree and always turn off the lights before leaving home or going to bed. Please do your part to make your home safe!

Heating is the second leading cause of U.S. home fires, deaths, and injuries. December, January, and February are the peak months for heating fires. Home fires occur more in the winter than in any other season, and heating equipment is involved in one of every six reported home fires, and one in every five home fire deaths. Space heaters are the type of equipment most often involved in home heating equipment fires. Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from heating equipment, such as the furnace, fireplace, wood stove, or portable space heater. Never use your oven to heat your home. Have a qualified professional install stationary space heating equipment, water heaters, or central heating equipment according to the local codes and manufacturer's instructions. Have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year by a qualified professional. Remember to turn portable heaters off

when leaving the room or going to bed. Always use the right kind of fuel, specified by the manufacturer, for fuel-burning space heaters. If you use a wood-burning fireplace, make sure it has a sturdy screen to stop sparks from flying into the room. Ashes should be cool before putting them in a metal container and keep that metal container a safe distance outside and away from your home. Please test your smoke alarms at least once a month to make sure they are working properly.

For more fire and home safety tips visit

<https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Teaching-tools/Safety-tip-sheets>

Mountain View Fire Rescue

<https://www.mvfpd.org/>