Holiday Safety at Home

A simple checklist for your family



The holidays bring more cooking, candles, decorations and visitors. Use this checklist together and post it on the refrigerator.

Start With Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarms

- ☐ Have smoke alarms on every level of your home and inside and outside sleeping areas.
- ☐ Test smoke alarms once a month.
- ☐ Replace smoke alarms that are 10 years old or older. Check the date on the back.
- ☐ Have carbon monoxide alarms on every level of your home.
- ☐ Test carbon monoxide alarms once a month. Replace them according to the manufacturer's instructions, generally before they are 7 years old.

Holiday Tree Safety

- ☐ A flame-resistant artificial tree is the safest choice.
- ☐ If you use a live tree, choose one with green needles that do not pull off easily.
- ☐ Add water to the tree stand every day.
- ☐ Keep the tree at least 3 feet away from fireplaces, heaters, radiators and heat vents.
- ☐ Turn off tree lights before going to bed or leaving home.
- ☐ Take down a live tree when it becomes dry. Do not leave it up for more than two weeks.
- ☐ Do not burn tree branches, needles or wrapping paper in a fireplace.

Candle Safety

- ☐ Use battery-operated flameless candles whenever possible.
- ☐ If you use real candles, put them in sturdy holders.
- ☐ Keep candles at least 12 inches away from anything that can burn, such as curtains, decorations, furniture or the tree.
- ☐ Never leave a burning candle unattended.
- ☐ Never put candles on or near a holiday tree.
- ☐ Blow out all candles before leaving a room or going to bed.

Decorations and Lights

- ☐ Choose flame-resistant or nonflammable decorations when possible.
- ☐ Keep decorations away from fireplaces, heaters, candles and other heat sources.
- ☐ Check all lights before using them. Throw away light strands with frayed wires, bare spots or broken sockets.
- ☐ Follow the manufacturer's directions for connecting light strands. Do not connect more than three strands unless the directions say it is safe.
- ☐ Do not overload outlets, power strips or extension cords.
- ☐ Do not run cords under rugs or across areas where people walk.

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Cooking Safety

- ☐ Stay in the kitchen when frying, grilling, broiling or boiling food.
- ☐ If you need to leave the kitchen, turn off the burner first.
- ☐ Keep towels, oven mitts, food packaging and other items that can burn away from the stovetop.
- ☐ Turn pot and pan handles toward the back of the stove.
- ☐ Keep children away from the cooking area.

If grease catches fire:

- ☐ Slide a lid over the pan.
- ☐ Turn off the heat if it is safe to do so.
- ☐ Never use water on a grease fire.
- ☐ Never move or carry a burning pan.
- ☐ Leave the home and call 911 if the fire grows or you cannot safely put it out.

Heating Safety

- ☐ Keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet away from fireplaces, wood stoves, radiators and space heaters.
- ☐ Plug space heaters directly into a wall outlet. Do not use an extension cord.
- ☐ Use space heaters with an automatic shut-off feature.
- ☐ Turn off portable heaters before leaving a room or going to bed.
- ☐ Have your furnace, chimney and chimney connector inspected each year.

Make a Home Escape Plan

- ☐ Know two ways out of every room, when possible.
- ☐ Choose an outside meeting place in front of your home.
- ☐ Tell everyone in the household, including holiday guests, where to meet.
- ☐ Practice a home fire drill.
- ☐ If there is a fire, get out, stay out and call 911 from outside.

Children and Guests

- ☐ Show guests the exits and your outside meeting place.
- ☐ Keep matches and lighters locked up and out of children's reach.
- ☐ Keep children at least 3 feet away from hot surfaces, including stoves, heaters, candles and fireplaces.

After the Holidays

- ☐ Remove a dry live tree promptly. Do not burn it in a fireplace.
- ☐ Store decorations away from heat sources.
- ☐ Test your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms again in January.

Safety reminder: Small habits can prevent fires and help your family leave safely if one occurs.

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