

HOLIDAY SAFETY

Holiday Fire Safety: Check Your List Twice

(NAPSA)—Make fire safety part of your holiday planning. The United States Fire Administration (USFA) reports that home fires occurring during the holiday season injure 2,000 individuals and cause over \$500 million in damage each year. Twelve hundred of these fires are associated with improper tree and candle care and, sadly, fires during the holiday season claim lives every year.

The following checklist from the USFA will help keep you, your home and your family safe this season:

- Check your smoke alarms. If the batteries are missing or do not work, replace them immediately. If you do not have smoke alarms, get them and install them on each level of your home. Having working smoke alarms more than doubles your chances of surviving a fire.

- Place your tree away from heat sources such as fireplaces, radiators and space heaters, which could dry and ignite the tree's branches.

- Give your tree plenty of water so it will not dry out.

- When a tree becomes dry, discard it promptly. The best way to dispose of your tree is by taking it to a recycling center or having it picked up by a community pickup service.

- Inspect holiday light strands for cracked or frayed wiring. Do not use lights with these flaws, as they could cause a fire. Also, don't leave home or go to bed with the holiday lights still on.

- Never leave lit candles or fireplace flames unattended. It is especially important to make sure they are extinguished before you go to bed or leave home.



Before putting up holiday lights, be sure to inspect them for cracked or frayed wiring.

- Never leave cooking unattended on the stove or use an oven to heat your home.

- Do not smoke while in bed, because falling asleep with a lit cigarette is hazardous. Careless smoking is the leading cause of fire fatalities in the United States.

- If you smoke or have had guests who smoke, check floors and furniture for dropped smoking materials that could start a fire.

- Develop a fire escape plan with your household and practice it regularly. Know two ways to exit from every room in your home.

The United States Fire Administration, a part of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, is the federal leader in public fire education and awareness, fire service training, fire-related technology and data collection. For further information on holiday fires or other fire safety topics, visit the USFA Web site at www.usfa.fema.gov.