

HOLIDAY SAFETY

Wishing You a Fire Safe Holiday

(NAPSA)—You don't have to let fire ruin your holiday festivities. Seasonal fire hazards often go unnoticed in the midst of holiday cheer and celebrations.

The United States Fire Administration (USFA) reminds you that traditional decorations can be dangerous if not properly maintained. According to USFA, more than 1,200 fire deaths and 190 fire injuries are caused by improper tree and candle care each year. Faulty wiring on light strands and unsafe heating practices cause additional holiday fires.

So, as you enjoy the season's celebrations, be aware of fire risks. The following tips from the USFA will help you and your family have safe and happy holidays:

Holiday Trees

- Do not place your tree close to a heat source, including fireplace or heat vent. The heat will dry the tree, causing it to be easily ignited by heat, flame or sparks.
- 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 pick-up service.
- Never put holiday tree branches or needles in a fireplace or woodstove.

Holiday Lights

- Inspect holiday lights each year for frayed wires, bare spots, gaps in the insulation, broken or cracked sockets and excessive kinking or wearing before putting them up.
- Only use UL approved lighting.
- Do not overload outlets. Connect strings of lights to an extension cord before plugging the cord into the outlet.
- Do not leave holiday lights unattended.



Heating Safety

- Unsafe heating practices can lead to fires and these fires are the second leading cause of residential fires and fire deaths in the United States.
- Never leave fireplaces or space heaters unattended.
- Keep a large screen in front of your fireplace to catch sparks and rolling logs.

Candles

- Avoid using lit candles. If you do use them, make sure they are in stable holders and place them where they cannot be easily knocked down.
- Never leave the house with candles burning.

Additionally...

- Install a smoke alarm on every level of your home. Test the batteries every month and change them at least once a year. Having a working smoke alarm more than doubles your chances of surviving a fire.

For more information on holiday fire safety or other fire safety topics, write to the United States Fire Administration, Public Fire Education, Building I, 16825 South Seton Avenue, Emmitsburg, MD 21727 or visit <http://www.usfa.fema.gov>.