

12 HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS

from the  American Red Cross

www.ClaremontRedCross.org

Keep Christmas Trees Fresh ~ Choose a fresh Christmas tree and secure it in a sturdy stand. Place the tree away from heat sources and exits, and water it daily. If you purchase an artificial tree, be sure it is labeled as fire-retardant.

Beware of Holiday Candles~ Be sure candles are kept away from decorations or other combustible materials. Don't leave children unattended in a room with lit candles, and always keep candles, as well as matches and lighters, out of the reach of children. Never use candles to decorate Christmas trees. Avoid using candles during parties. Never display lighted candles in windows or near exits.

Test Tree Trimmings ~ When decorating with lights, be sure to purchase only those labeled by a testing laboratory. Never use candles to decorate Christmas trees. For outside decorations, use only those lights labeled for outdoor use. Don't overload electrical outlets, and always unplug all lights before leaving home or going to bed. Never put electrical lights on a metal Christmas tree.

Prepare for Holiday Parties ~ Decorate only with flame-retardant or noncombustible materials. Avoid using candles during parties. If guests will be smoking, provide them with large, deep ashtrays and check them frequently. After the party, check inside and under upholstery and in trash cans for cigarette butts that may be smoldering.

Designate a Driver ~ When attending a party, always designate a non-drinking driver. If you are the host of a holiday gathering, be sure there are non-alcoholic beverages available for guests who are driving.

Inspect Fireplaces ~ Have your chimney inspected by a professional prior to the start of every heating season and cleaned if necessary. Creosote, a chemical substance that forms when wood burns, builds up in chimneys and can cause a chimney fire if not properly cleaned. Always protect your family and home by using a sturdy screen when burning fires.

Remember to burn only wood - never burn paper or pine boughs, which can float out of the chimney and ignite a neighboring home. Never use flammable liquids in a fireplace. If you are purchasing a factory-built fireplace, select one listed by a testing laboratory, and have it installed according to local codes. If you plan to hang stockings on your fireplace, do not use the fireplace for fires.

Be Cautious With Portable and Space Heaters ~ Place space heaters at least three feet (one meter) away from anything combustible, including wallpaper, bedding, clothing, pets, and people. Never leave space heaters operating when you are not in the room or when you go to bed. Don't leave children or pets unattended with space heaters and be sure everyone knows that drying wet mittens or other clothing over space heaters is a fire hazard.

Watch Your Wood Stoves ~ Be sure your wood or coal stove bears the label of a recognized testing laboratory and meets local fire codes. Follow manufacturers' recommendations for proper use and maintenance. Chimney connections and chimney flues should be inspected at the beginning of each heating season and cleaned if necessary.

Follow the same safety rules for wood stoves as you would for space heaters. Burn only wood, and be sure the wood stove is placed on an approved stove board to protect the floor from heat and hot coals. Be sure to check with your local fire department and check local codes before having your wood stove installed.

Cook with Care ~ When cooking, do not wear loose fitting clothing. It can be ignited by hot burners. Always turn pot handles in. Don't store items on the stove top; they could catch fire. Keep kitchen appliances clean and in good condition, and turn them off after use. Don't overload electrical outlets, and don't use appliances with frayed or cracked wires.

Buckle Up ~ During the holiday months, people travel more than ever. Wearing a seat belt may prevent injury in a motor vehicle collision. Ensure that all passengers are also wearing safety belts. Please remember to seat children in the back seat of the car and in approved safety seats if younger than six years old, or according to local law.

Prepare a Winter Storm Plan ~ Have extra blankets on hand and ensure that each member of your household has a warm coat, gloves or mittens, hat, and water-resistant boots. Stay tuned for storm warnings by listening to NOAA Weather Radio and your local radio and television stations for updated storm information. It's also important to have your car winterized before winter storm season.

Enroll in a First Aid & CPR course ~ Although these tips can help prevent an emergency, it is also important to be prepared should an emergency situation arise. To enroll in a first aid or CPR course, please visit www.ClaremontRedCross.org, contact the **Claremont Red Cross at (909) 624-0074**, or your local American Red Cross Chapter *(listed in the white pages)*.



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