



Holiday Seasonal Safety

Electrical and Fire Safety

What is the Problem?

Decorating homes and businesses is a long-standing tradition around the holiday season.¹ Unfortunately, electronically lit decorations and cold weather put extra demands on heating equipment and electrical output; 57 percent of fires are caused by defective heating equipment.³ Based on data from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), an estimated 240 home fires involve Christmas trees and another 150 home fires involve holiday lights each year.⁴ Together, these fires result in 21 deaths and \$25.2 million in direct property damage annually.⁵



Who is at Risk?

There are more cars, people, and confusion during the Christmas season than any other time of the year.⁶ Because of the influx of travel and inclement weather everyone is more prone to accidents this time of year.⁷

Prevention Tips

Injury during this busy time of year is a preventable public health problem. Keep your family safe by following these safety tips:

- Check your furnace regularly and have it inspected by professionals.⁸
- Inspect your fireplace for safe operations. Never leave it unattended.⁹
- Only use decorative lights approved for outdoor use outside.¹⁰
- Do not overload circuits or power strips. Turn lights off when you leave the house.¹¹
- Place cords away from traffic areas and heat sources, not under rugs.¹²
- Check cords and plugs for wear, frayed insulation, cracks, and loose connections.¹³
- Place holiday trees away from heat sources and open flames.¹⁴
- Check the lights before decorating, look for loose sockets or broken and frayed wires.¹⁵
- Keep water in tree base container and check it often.¹⁶



Plan of the Week (POW):

Following a few simple fire safety tips can keep electric lights, candles, and the ever popular Christmas tree from creating a tragedy.¹⁷ **BEFORE** a fire occurs, learn how to prevent a fire and what to do in case one starts in your home.¹⁸ Make sure all exits are accessible and not blocked by decorations or trees.¹⁹ **DON'T** let an accident ruin your Christmas holiday season. Think safety all the time and have a safe and Merry Christmas, and a safe and happy New Year.²⁰

References

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NMCPHC Injury Prevention and Violence Free Living Webpage

<http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/health-promotion/injury-violence-free-living/Pages/injury-violence-free-living.aspx>

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