

Holiday Fire Safety Tips

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The holidays are a very special time of year for having fun and sharing and making beautiful lasting memories. With so many activities and so much excitement, basic fire safety precautions are often overlooked. As a result, many times every holiday season preventable house fires cause deaths and catastrophic fire damage in the United States.

To help ensure the events of your holiday season do not include fire emergencies, use the following basic safety tips for preventing house fires:

Take Proper Precautions Using Holiday Lights

This is the season of holiday lights and all manner of festive home decor. Just remember to pay attention to these safety basics when decorating your home with holiday lights:

- Use only UL-rated clips for hanging holiday lights on the exterior or interior of your home.
- Limit loads on holiday light wiring strands by connecting no more than a maximum of 3 strands of lights.
- Connect no more than a maximum of 50 bulbs into light strands containing ports for screwing in bulbs.
- Check each light strand for any worn, cracked, or fraying wires.
- Replace any broken bulbs.
- Unplug all decorative holiday lights when you go to bed or leave your home.

Use Holiday Candles Safely

Holiday candles help create a lovely ambiance for celebrating the season. But, candles are one of the most common causes of house fires. That means when they're misused, candles become one of the most dangerous threats to your safety and your home:

- Don't leave candles unattended.
- Keep candles a safe distance from upholstery and curtains. Allow distance for curtains to be blown outward by doors opening and closing, air movement from HVAC floor vents, or other causes.
- Keep candles out of reach of children and pets.
- Extinguish candle flames properly after use.

Practice Safe Kitchen Habits

With holiday meal preparations, it's an important time to assess your kitchen safety situation and remind yourself and others about basic kitchen fire safety practices:

- Don't leave stove-top cooking, oven baking, or microwave cooking unattended.
- Check to ensure that your fire extinguisher is up to date and working properly.
- Test to make sure you truly know how to use your fire extinguisher.
- Know how to put out a grease fire vs. a non-grease fire.
- Check smoke detectors in your kitchen (and throughout your home).

Maintain Your Christmas Tree Properly

If your family is celebrating the Christmas holiday and putting up a Christmas tree with decorations that include lights, use these safety tips:

- Real tree: If you use a real cut tree, water it frequently to prevent it from becoming too dry. Hot lights running for long hours every day for weeks against extremely dry and brittle needles increase the level of fire hazards.
- Artificial tree: If you choose to use an artificial tree, be sure that the tree you purchase is flame-retardant and approved for use with lights before setting it up in your home.

Manage Power Strips Safely

Between all the extra holiday lighting, extra baking and cooking to be done, kids home for winter break and busy gaming, and more, holidays often call for added power strips:

- Use only UL-approved power strips.
- Know your power strip load limits and the amount of load that each device you plug into it requires. Don't plug multiple devices that are each high electricity consumers into the same power strip.
- Do not plug extension cords into power strips or vice versa.

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Happy Holidays from your Utah Flood Cleanup team!