

HOLIDAY FIRE SAFETY

QUINCY FIRE DEPARTMENT



The holiday season is one of the most dangerous times of the year for household fires, so take note of the following tips to reduce your risk for fires.

During the holiday season, residential fires are more frequent, more costly, and more deadly than at any other time of the year. When the source of the fire is a highly flammable Christmas tree, the toll in property and of lives is even greater. To keep your household from becoming a holiday statistic, here are some safety tips to follow.

COOKING

- Cooking is the top cause of holiday fires, according to the United States Fire Administration.
- The most common culprit is food that's left unattended.
- Make sure to keep a kitchen fire extinguisher that's rated for all types of fires and check that smoke detectors are working properly.

CANDLES

- The incidence of candle fires is four times higher during December than during other months.
- According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), four of the five most dangerous days of the year for residential candle fires are Christmas/Christmas Eve and New Year's/New Year's Eve. (The fifth is Halloween)
- To reduce the danger, maintain about a foot of space between the candle and anything that can burn.
- Set candles on sturdy bases or cover with hurricane globes.
- Never leave flames unattended.
- Before bed, walk through each room to make sure candles are blown out.
- For an atmosphere without worry, consider flameless LED candles.

CHRISTMAS TREES

- It takes less than thirty (30) seconds for a dry tree to engulf a room in flames.
- To minimize the risk, buy a fresh tree with intact needles, get a fresh cut on the truck, and water it every day.
- Keep the tree away from heat sources, such as fireplaces or space heaters, and out of the traffic patterns. (At least 3 feet away)

FACTS

Statistics show when holiday fires occur, they do more damage:

-  Property loss during a holiday fire is 34 % greater than in an average fire
-  The number of fatalities per thousand fires is nearly 70% higher.



Before Heading Out or to Bed

Blow out lit candles when you leave the room or go to bed. **Turn off** all Christmas lights and decorations before leaving home or going to bed.

- No matter how well the tree is watered, it will start to dry out after about four weeks, so take it down after the holidays.
- Artificial trees don't pose much of a fire hazard; just make sure yours is flame-retardant.



HAPPY HOLIDAYS



DECORATIVE LIGHTS

- Inspect light strings and throw out any with frayed or cracked wires or broken sockets.
- Don't run more than three strings of lights end to end. Read manufacturer's instructions.
- Extension cords should be in good condition and UL-rated for indoor or outdoor use.
- When hanging lights outside, avoid using nails or stapler, which can damage the wiring and increase the risk of a fire. Use UL-rated clips or hangers.



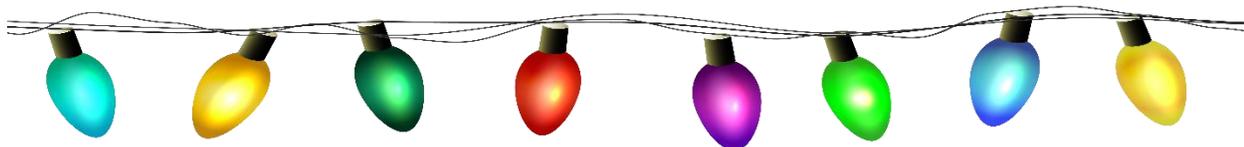
KIDS PLAYING WITH MATCHES

- The number of blazes and, tragically, the number of deaths caused by children playing with fire goes up significantly during the holidays.
- The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) reports, from January through March, 13% of fire deaths is the result of children playing with fire. In December, that percentage doubles.
- Keep matches and lighters out of the reach of children.



FIREPLACES

- Soot can harden on chimney walls as flammable creosote, so before the fireplace season begins, have your chimney inspected to see if it needs cleaning.
- Screen the fireplace to prevent sparks from popping out onto the floor or carpet.
- Never use flammable liquids to start a fire in the fireplace.
- Only burn seasoned wood.
- When cleaning out the fireplace, put ashes in a metal container and set them outside to cool 24 hours before disposal.



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