



MAFES Dawg Tracks

December, 2012



Safety Tips: **Christmas
Holiday Safety**



Harvest time is complete and the year is coming to an end faster than we want to remember. Where did 2012 go? We were asking ourselves this same question in 2011. The season is just around the corner, so we better get ready. Ready must include remaining safe to enjoy the spiritual, family and friendship celebrations of the season.

INTERESTING FACTS FROM THE CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION-

- ✓ Every year hospital emergency rooms treat about 12,500 people with injuries from falls, cuts and shocks from holiday lights, decorations and Christmas trees.
- ✓ Candles start about 11,600 fires, resulting in 150 deaths, 1,200 injuries and \$173 million in property losses.
- ✓ Christmas trees alone are involved in about 300 fires, resulting in 10 deaths, 30 injuries, and an average of \$10 million in property losses.

Following are some tips that, if we heed them, will allow us to enjoy the festivities and arrive home in the same shape as we left:

BEWARE OF HOLIDAY LIGHTS-

- ✓ Keep candles away from decorations and other combustible materials.
- ✓ Do not leave children in rooms alone with lit candles.
- ✓ Keep candles, matches, and lighters out of reach of children.
- ✓ Do not use candles to decorate Christmas trees and avoid using them at your parties.
- ✓ Do not use lighted candles in windows.

TEST TREE TRIMINGS-

- ✓ If you decorate with lights-be sure to buy the types that have been tested by an approved laboratory.
- ✓ For outside decorations-use only lights labeled for outside use.
- ✓ Do not overload electrical outlets-always unplug all your lights when you leave home and when you go to bed.
- ✓ Do not use electric lights on a metal tree.

KEEP CHRISTMAS TREES FRESH-

- ✓ Choose a fresh tree and secure in a sturdy stand.
- ✓ Locate the tree away from heat sources and water it daily.
- ✓ If you buy an artificial tree, make sure that it is fire-retardant.

PREPARE FOR HOLIDAY PARTIES-

- ✓ Decorate with flame-retardant or non-combustible materials. Avoid using candles at parties.
- ✓ If smoking is allowed, be sure to supply a sufficient number of ashtrays and check them regularly.
- ✓ After the party, check your upholstery, furniture, cushions, and ashtrays for smoldering butts.

DESIGNATE A DRIVER-

- ✓ If you are a party attendant-select a driver.
- ✓ If you are the host-you should have non-alcohol beverages
- ✓ For the drivers.

INSPECT FIREPLACES-

- ✓ Fireplaces should be cleaned and inspected each year before the heating season sets in. Creosote forms as wood burns, creating a buildup in the chimney walls that will cause a fire if not properly cleaned.
- ✓ Always protect your home and family by using a sturdy screen when burning fires.
- ✓ You should always burn wood and no paper or pine limbs which can have particles floating out of the chimney and could ignite your neighbor's yard.
- ✓ Never use flammable liquids in the fireplace.
- ✓ If you buy a factory built fireplace, buy one that has been approved by a reputable laboratory. Be sure that the installation is in accordance with local standards.
- ✓ If you're hanging stockings on the mantel piece, don't start a fire in the fireplace.

BE CAUTIOUS WITH PORTABLE AND SPACE HEATERS-

- ✓ Be sure that your wood or coal burning stove is an approved model from a reputable laboratory.
- ✓ Follow the manufacturer's instructions for proper maintenance and use.
- ✓ Locate your wood heater 1 meter (3 feet) away from any combustibles including wallpaper, bedding, pets and people.
- ✓ Never leave space heaters unattended or leave children in the room where space heaters are used.
- ✓ Never dry garments or gloves by laying them on the heaters.
- ✓ Be sure to have a flame-retardant floor pad underneath the space heaters to protect the floor.

HOLIDAY SHOPPING SAFETY-

- ✓ Whenever possible, do your holiday shopping during daylight hours.
- ✓ Avoid wearing expensive jewelry during shopping sprees.
- ✓ Refrain from carrying a purse or wallet, and if so, avoid large amounts of cash. Use debit or credit cards for purchases. These are prime targets for thieves in crowded shopping areas, transportation terminals, bus stops, and other means of rapid transportation.
- ✓ Park in well-lit parking areas that are well traveled.
- ✓ When you're doing your night shopping, it's better to have a "buddy" along.
- ✓ When you return to your car from a shopping spree, look inside the front and back before opening the car door to be sure that there are no strangers hanging around your car.

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Excerpts: www.ou.edu/oupd

<http://usgovinfo.about.com/library/weekly/blholidaysafety.htm>

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**THE BEST OF ALL GIFTS AROUND ANY
CHRISTMAS TREE:
THE PRESENCE OF A HAPPY FAMILY
ALL WRAPPED UP IN EACH OTHER!**