

Christmas Safety

Hooray! Christmas time is around the corner! It's funny but even with the cold and the increased hustle and bustle due to the extra shopping we feel obligated to do, it seems that we are, indeed, walking around in a much more cheery mood. This is a great time of the year. Decorations are adding to the festive mood, as excitement, happiness and anticipation intertwine with the holiday season. And while everyone looks forward to the sheer fun and enjoyment of the holidays, we all NEED to practice a little caution to ensure the positive spirit remains embraced within us all and not dampened by any type of tragedy; It is unfortunate, but more than 80,000 people a year require hospital treatment for injuries such as falls, cuts and burns at Christmas time.

Here are just a few things to keep in mind when getting ready for the holidays.

While decorating homes and businesses is a long-standing tradition around the holiday season these same decorations may increase your chances of fire. Based on data from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), an estimated 250 home fires involving Christmas trees and another 170 home fires involving holiday lights and other decorative lighting occur each year. Together, these fires resulted in 21 deaths and 43 injuries. The leading cause of Christmas tree fires and property damage is short circuit or poor ground faults (21%). As it turns out, electrical failure (other than short circuit incidents) ranked second in number of fires, injuries and property damage. According to the NFPA, cords and plugs were the leading type of equipment involved in the ignition of Christmas trees.

If your household includes a natural tree in its festivities, **keep the tree watered**. Keeping them moist is important as wood is considered a fuel source for fire once ignition has occurred through such events as shorts in electrical lights or open flames from candles, lighters or matches start tree fires. Well-watered trees are not a problem; however, a dry and neglected tree can be.

Bright Ideas for Lights

- Indoors or outside; always use lights that have been tested for safety by a recognized testing laboratory that indicates conformance with safety standards.
- Check each set of lights, new or old, for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections, and throw out damaged sets.
- Use no more than three standard-size sets of lights per single extension cord.
- Never use electric lights on a metallic tree. The tree can become charged with electricity from faulty lights, and a person touching a branch could be electrocuted.
- Plug all outdoor electric decorations into circuits with ground fault circuit interrupters to avoid potential shocks.
- Turn off all lights when you go to bed or leave the house. If the lights short out and start a fire you will be unaware; thereby reducing the opportunity to properly respond to the emergency.
Unattended cooking is the leading cause of home fires in the U.S. When cooking for holiday visitors, remember to keep an eye on the range.
- Extinguish all candles when leaving the room or going to sleep.
- Keep candles away from items that can catch fire. December is the peak month for candle fires, with nearly twice the average number of incidents. 44% of reported candle fires in the home started in the bedroom.
- Use candleholders that are sturdy, won't tip over easily, are made from a material that can't burn and are large enough to collect dripping wax.

- Keep candles and all open flames away from flammable liquids.

Indigestion and food poisoning

- Food poisoning is always a worry at Christmas. Read the instructions on the turkey well. It takes hours to cook a turkey properly and if you don't the result can be salmonella, which can be life-threatening for vulnerable people.
- Studies by the British Nutrition Foundation (BNF) reveal that, on average, we gain two kilograms (five pounds) in weight during the Christmas period, so...well you get the point!
- After a party, empty any alcohol out of glasses. Children are likely to drink the remains if they get up early to play with their toys. And...Of Course...**Never drink and drive.**
- Clutter, alcohol and tiredness make the stairs an accident hotspot during Christmas. Falling down steps or stairs after drinking is a common accident.
- Keep the stairs well lit and free from obstacles, especially if you have guests who could be going up to the bathroom during the night.

Presents

Typical Christmas Day accidents include parents accidentally stabbing themselves with scissors that they've used instead of a screwdriver to assemble toys, people cutting themselves with knives when they're opening presents too quickly and people tripping over toys and electric cables in the rush to try their new computers and other appliances.

Kitchen

Try to keep other people (especially children) out of the kitchen, stay off the alcohol until you've finished cooking and wipe up spills as soon as they happen, so that people don't slip.

“A DREAM YOU DREAM ALONE IS ONLY A DREAM. A DREAM YOU
DREAM TOGETHER IS REALITY”

“ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE”

John Lennon

(October 9, 1940- December 8, 1980)

*Courtesy of Robert Brounstein, Corporate Director Safety and Health with
TerranearPMC*