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The City of Tallahassee
and The Tallahassee Fire Department
present:



The Newsladder

Special Best of Holiday Edition

As another holiday season fast approaches, we bring you this special edition with some articles from past holiday editions. Have a happy and safe holiday season!

Tis the Season for Trees, Cooking, and Candles... (2009 Holiday Edition)



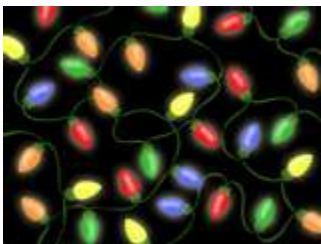
As the holiday season nears, many people are preparing themselves for holiday fun as well as the cold weather. In anticipation of "old man winter," many people are purchasing space heaters, candles, and wood for the fireplace. However, there are quite a few dangers involved with the use of alternative heating sources in the home.

According to the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), "heating is second only to cooking as the leading cause of residential structure fires. Additionally, more than half of residential heating fires are due to mechanical failure. In one- and two-family residences, one- third of heating fires result from improper maintenance of heating equipment."

In most cases, the number of heating related fires are increased in the winter months due to cold weather, yet, the addition of holiday decorations in the home also plays a major role in the increased amount of home fires during this time.

USFA stated, "in residential structure fires where the ignition point is a Christmas tree or other holiday decoration, the fire is typically more severe in every measurable way."

Each year, fire departments respond to an average of 210 structure fires caused by Christmas trees. Carefully decorating Christmas trees can help make your holidays safer.



Christmas Tree Safety Tips

Picking the tree

- If you have an artificial tree, be sure it is labeled, certified, or identified by the manufacturer as fire retardant.
- Choose a tree with fresh, green needles that do not fall off when touched.

Placing the tree

- Before placing the tree in the stand, cut 1–2" from the base of the trunk.
- Make sure the tree is at least three feet away from any heat source, like fireplaces, radiators, candles, heat vents or lights.
- Make sure the tree is not blocking an exit.
- Add water to the tree stand. Be sure to add water daily.

Lighting the tree

- Use lights that have the label of an independent testing laboratory. Some lights are only for indoor or outdoor use, but not both.
- Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Connect no more than three strands of mini string sets and a maximum of 50 bulbs for screw-in bulbs.
- Never use lit candles to decorate the tree.
- Always turn off Christmas tree lights before leaving home or going to

bed.

After Christmas

Get rid of the tree when it begins dropping needles. Dried-out trees are a fire danger and should not be left in the home or garage, or placed outside against the home. Check with your local community to find a recycling program. Bring outdoor electrical lights inside after the holidays to prevent hazards and make them last longer.

Cooking

Cooking fires are the #1 cause of home fires and home fire injuries. Nearly all cooking equipment fires start with the ignition of food, other cooking materials (e.g., grease, cooking oil), or other items normally found or installed in a kitchen (e.g., cabinets, wall coverings, paper or plastic bags, curtains).

Facts & figures

- In 2005, U.S. fire departments responded to 146,400 home structure fires that involved cooking equipment in 2005. These fires caused 480 civilian fire deaths, 4,690 civilian fire injuries and \$876 million in direct property damage.
- Cooking equipment fires are the leading cause of home structure fires and associated civilian injuries. These fires accounted for 40% of all reported home structure fires in 2005 and 36% of home civilian injuries.

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Poinsettias: Myth Uncovered (2006 Holiday Edition)

In the past, there have been many rumors about the toxicity levels of poinsettias.

According to the doctors on Medicine.net, some sources attribute the rumor about the dangers of poinsettia leaves to a poisoning in 1919 that led to the death of a two year-old child, which was incorrectly determined to be a poinsettia leaf.

Doctors at the Children's

Hospital of Pittsburgh and the Pittsburgh Poison Center conducted a review of 22,793 reported cases of poinsettia exposures, the majority (93%) of which occurred in children and found that 92% of those exposed did not develop any symptoms at all. Furthermore, no deaths resulting from poinsettia ingestion have ever been documented.

Though poinsettias have not caused any known fa-

talities, it is still important to avoid ingestion of the plant. If the plant is accidentally eaten, Medicine.net stated, "usually, the most harm that a poinsettia can do after ingestion (in rare cases) is cause nausea and vomiting." However, because of the unpleasant and bitter taste, doctors say that people, especially children, would not eat enough of the poinsettia to cause major symptoms.

Turkey Frying (2007 Holiday Edition)

Turkeys are a delicious part of most holiday meals. If you are going to fry your turkey be aware of the potential safety hazards associated with this cooking method.

- Hot oil may splash or spill at any point during the cooking process; when the fryer is jarred or tipped over, the turkey is placed in the fryer or removed, or the turkey is moved from the fryer to the table. Any contact between hot oil and skin could result in serious injury. Any contact between hot oil and nonmetallic materials could lead to serious damage.
- A major spill of hot oil can occur with fryers designed for outdoor use and using a stand, as these units are particularly vulnerable to upset or collapse, followed by a major spill of hot oil. Newer countertop units using a solid base appear to reduce this particular risk.
- In deep frying, oil is heated to temperatures of 350 degrees Fahrenheit or more. Cooking oil is combustible, and if it is heated beyond its cooking temperature, its vapors can ignite. This is a fire danger separate from the burn danger inherent in the hot oil. Overheating can occur if temperature controls, which are designed to shut off the fryer if the oil overheats, are defective, or if the appliance has no temperature controls.
- Propane-fired turkey fryers are designed for outdoor use, particularly for Thanksgiving. If rain or snow strikes exposed hot cooking oil, the result can be a splattering of the hot oil or a conversion of the rain or snow to steam, either of which can lead to burns. Use of propane fired turkey fryers indoors to avoid bad weather is contrary to their design and dangerous in its own right. Fires have occurred when turkey fryers were used in a garage or barn or under eaves to keep the appliance out of the rain. The approximately 5 gallons of oil in these devices introduce an additional level of hazard to deep fryer cooking, as does the size and weight of the turkey, which must be safely lowered into and raised out of the large quantity of hot oil. Many turkeys are purchased frozen, and they may not be fully thawed when cooking begins. As with a rainy day, a defrosting turkey creates the risk of contact between hot cooking oil.



www.nfpa.org

Other Holiday Safety Tips (2008 Holiday Edition)

The holiday season is a busy one. Now is a good time to take a few minutes to think about how to make it a safer one. Here are a few extra tips to follow:

- Have visitors put luggage and purses up high where they can't be reached.
- Ask visitors with medications to secure them out

of reach of little ones.

- Remove all wrapping papers, bags, paper, ribbons, and bows from tree and fireplace areas after gifts are opened. These items can pose suffocation and choking hazards to a small child or can cause a fire if near an open flame.
- Remember that the homes you visit may not

be childproofed. Keep an eye out for danger spots.

- Do not burn wrapping papers in the fireplace. A flash fire may result as wrappings ignite suddenly and burn intensely.

www.gerberlife.com

Tis the Season

(continued from page 1)

- Twelve percent of the fires occurred when something that could catch fire was too close to the equipment.



- Thanksgiving is the peak day for home cooking fires.

Cooking Safety Tips

- Be on alert! If you are sleepy or have consumed alcohol, don't use the stove or stovetop.
- Stay in the kitchen while you are frying, grilling, or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove.
- If you are simmering, baking, roasting, or boiling food, check it regularly, remain in the home while food is cooking, and use a timer to remind you that you are cooking.

Candle Safety Tips

“CANDLE WITH CARE”

- Blow out all candles when you leave the room or go to bed. Avoid the use of candles in the bedroom and other areas where people may fall asleep.
- Keep candles at least 12 inches away from anything that can burn.

If you do burn candles, make sure that you...

- Use candle holders that are sturdy and won't tip over easily.
- Put candle holders on a sturdy, uncluttered surface.
- Light candles carefully. Keep your hair and any loose clothing away from the flame.
- Don't burn a candle all the way down — put it out before it gets too close to the holder or container.

- Never use a candle if oxygen is used in the home.
- Have flashlights and battery-powered lighting ready to use during a power outage. Never use candles.
- Never leave a child alone in a room with a burning candle. Keep matches and lighters up high and out of children's reach, in a locked cabinet.

Candle Facts

- On average, a candle fire in the home is reported to a U.S. fire department every **34** minutes.
- Thirty-eight percent (**38%**) of home candle fires start in the bedroom.
- More than half of all candle fires start when things that can burn are too close to the candle.

www.nfpa.org

Toy Safety Tips for Santa's Helpers (2009 Holiday Edition)

WHEN BUYING TOYS

- Choose toys with care. Keep in mind the child's age, interests and skill level.
- Look for quality design and construction in all toys for all ages.
- Make sure that all directions or instructions are clear -- to you, and, when appropriate, to the child.
- Plastic wrappings on toys should be discarded at once before they become deadly playthings.
- Be a label reader. Look for and heed age recommendations, such as "Not recommended for children under three". Look for other safety labels including: "Flame retardant/Flame resistant" on fabric products and "Washable/hygienic materials" on stuffed toys and dolls.



ALL TOYS ARE NOT FOR ALL CHILDREN

Keep toys designed for older children out of the hands of little ones. Follow labels that give age recommendations -- some toys are recommended for older children because they may be hazardous in the hands of a younger child. Teach older children to help keep their toys away from younger brothers and sisters.

ELECTRIC TOYS

Electric toys that are improperly constructed, wired or misused can shock or burn. Electric toys must meet mandatory requirements for maximum surface temperatures, electrical construction and prominent warning labels. Electric toys with heating elements are recommended only for children over eight years old. Children should be taught to use electric toys properly, cautiously and under adult supervision.

www.cpsc.gov

Holiday Shopping So Only Your Wallet Could Get Hurt (2008 Holiday Edition)



The hustle and bustle of holiday shopping can be made safer by following these simple tips:

Help keep your children safe while shopping -

- Teach them to go to a store clerk or security guard if you get separated.
- Keep children under age 4 in a stroller or supervise them closely.
- If you place your child in a shopping cart, always use the safety belt. Stay close to the cart. Never let your child stand in or push

a shopping cart.

Don't be an easy victim for violent crime -

- Stay alert at all times and pay attention to your surroundings.
- Park in a well-lit space away from decorative bushes. Lock your car, roll up the windows, and hide packages in the trunk or under a blanket. Be especially alert in parking decks and underground garages.
- Don't overload yourself with packages.
- Have your car keys in

hand before heading to the parking lot.

Be careful when riding on escalators -

- Make sure no one in your group has loose shoe laces, drawstrings, scarves, or mittens that could get trapped in the escalator.
- Hold your child's hand, face forward, and keep feet away from the edge of the steps.
- Never bring strollers, carts, or walkers on an escalator.

www.safeusa.org

The 12 Ways to Health Holiday Song

Learn how to stay safe and healthy with this festive song, sung to the tune of *The Twelve Days of Christmas!**

1. The **first** way to health, said the CDC to me
[Wash hands](#) to be safe and healthy.

2. The **second** way to health, said the CDC to me
[Bundle up for warmth](#), and wash hands to be safe and healthy.

3. The **third** way to health, said the CDC to me
[Manage stress](#), bundle up for warmth, and wash hands to be safe and healthy.

4. The **fourth** way to health, said the CDC to me
[Don't drink and drive](#), manage stress, bundle up for warmth, and wash hands to be safe and healthy.

5. The **fifth** way to health, said the CDC to me
[BE SMOKE-FREE](#), don't drink and drive, manage stress, bundle up for warmth, and wash hands to be safe and healthy.

6. The **sixth** way to health, said the CDC to me
[Fasten belts while driving](#), BE SMOKE-FREE, don't drink and drive, manage stress, bundle up for warmth, and wash hands to be safe and healthy.

7. The **seventh** way to health, said the CDC to me
[Get exams and screenings](#), fasten belts while driving, BE SMOKE-FREE, don't drink and drive, manage stress, bundle up for warmth, and wash hands to be safe and healthy.

8. The **eighth** way to health, said the CDC to me
[Get your vaccinations](#), get exams and screenings, fasten belts while driving, BE SMOKE-FREE, don't drink and drive, manage stress, bundle up for warmth, and wash hands to be safe and healthy.

9. The **ninth** way to health, said the CDC to me
[Monitor the children](#), get your vaccinations, get exams and screenings, fasten belts while driving, BE SMOKE-FREE, don't drink and drive, manage stress, bundle up for warmth, and wash hands to be safe and healthy.

10. The **tenth** way to health, said the CDC to me
[Practice fire safety](#), monitor the children, get your vaccinations, get exams and screenings, fasten belts while driving, BE SMOKE-FREE, don't drink and drive, manage stress, bundle up for warmth, and wash hands to be safe and healthy.

11. The **eleventh** way to health, said the CDC to me
[Prepare dinner safely](#), practice fire safety, monitor the children, get your vaccinations, get exams and screenings, fasten belts while driving, BE SMOKE-FREE, don't drink and drive, manage stress, bundle up for warmth, and wash hands to be safe and healthy.

12. The **twelfth** way to health, said the CDC to me
[Eat well and get moving](#), prepare dinner safely, practice fire safety, monitor the children, get your vaccinations, get exams and screenings, fasten belts while driving, BE SMOKE-FREE, don't drink and drive, manage stress, bundle up for warmth, and wash hands to be safe and healthy.

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TFD's booth at the North Florida Fair.