



FIRE DEPARTMENT

HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS

The holidays are here and with them comes times of joy. But with the holidays there is also an element of danger and that is fire. With the holidays upon us decorations and Christmas trees will be going up and lots of holiday cooking. With these does come an increased risk of fire. Here are some safety tips to help everyone enjoy this wonderful time of year and keep you and your home safe. From the members of the Muscatine Fire Department, we wish you happy holidays.

Holiday Cooking:

- Clean the oven and the stove prior to the holidays the excess load on it can cause grease to build up and cause a fire
- Turn pot handles away from the front of the stove to prevent children from pulling them off
- Don't position handles over another burner they can catch fire
- Wear short sleeves or tight fitting sleeves
- Be careful when lifting lids off hot pots avoiding the hot steam
- Don't lay potholders near or on the stove they can catch fire
- If there is a fire in the oven turn it off
- Never try to move a pan that is on fire, throw water in it, or put flour in it
- If you do have a stove fire, get everyone out of the house and call 911
- If you do try to extinguish the fire it is best to use a class ABC fire extinguisher and do not spray the grease out of the pan
- Small fires can be smothered by baking soda
- Remember even if you get the fire out still call the fire department

Decorations and lights:

- Use only non-combustible or flame-resistant materials to trim a tree
- Be sure the lights you use outdoors are labeled and certified for outdoor use
- Plug outdoor lights and decorations into circuits protected by ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI)
- Portable outdoor GFCI's can be purchased where electrical supplies are sold
- Fasten outdoor lights securely to prevent the wind from blowing them and damaging them
- Never use electric lights on a metallic Christmas tree
- If you have to use extension cords never use more than "3" standard-size sets of lights per cord and do not place the cord under any objects including rugs or place them in a walkway path
- Keep decorations away from heat sources
- Check all indoor and outdoor lights for frayed cords as well as other decorations and throw away if any doubt
- Never use lights that have an empty socket



FIRE DEPARTMENT

- Do not allow lights to touch combustible materials
- Mini lights are safest because they produce less heat
- Always unplug lights before leaving home or going to bed

Christmas Trees:

Choosing a tree that's already cut. Grasp a branch between a thumb and forefinger and pull towards you. Very few needles will come off if the tree is fresh. Bump the trunk of the tree on the ground. If green needles fall off the tree is not fresh. Expect a few brown needles to fall off. If many fall off choose another tree. Select trees that have only been cut for a short period of time. When you get your tree home cut 1 inch off the end of the trunk. If the water level drops below the cut trunk, a seal will form and prevent the tree from absorbing water. By decorating the tree with a large quantity of lights, you add a constant heat source to your tree. Here are some other tree tips:

- Pine and Leyland Cypress will stay fresh longer
- Keep away from fireplaces, heat vents, and other heat producing appliances
- Do not use candles or other flaming devices near your tree
- Use lights that bear the Underwriters' Laboratory label on them
- Do not burn the branches from your tree in the fireplace
- Use only indoor lights never use outdoor lights on a Christmas tree
- Supply the tree with plenty of water and keep the stand filled as long as it remains in your home
- Turn your tree lights off when not around the tree
- DO NOT add bleach to your Christmas tree water. Bleach can quickly kill cut trees
- Keep the Christmas tree room cool
- Avoid combustible decorations
- Keep metal foil and tinsel away from electrical sockets
- Spraying the tree with a flame retardant is always a good idea
- Test your lights to make sure the cords are not frayed and they have no broken or missing bulbs
- Do not overload the outlet or the drop cords
- When purchasing an artificial tree look for the label "fire resistant" this does not mean the tree won't catch fire

Other holiday safety tips to keep in mind:

- If children are participating in holiday candle lighting ceremonies make sure an adult supervises them
- Keep children away from decorative lights and electrical decorations
- Throw wrapping paper away immediately after opening a package
- Keep wrapped packages away from heat sources



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These are some tips to help you enjoy your holiday season. Also remember during this type of season as well as any other time of the year to practice your home escape plan and make relatives and friends staying for the holidays know 2 ways out, check your smoke detectors and if needed replace the batteries, and make sure you have good working fire extinguishers in your home. Happy holidays from MFD.

**"I remember Muscatine for its sunsets. I have never seen any
on either side of the ocean that equaled them" — Mark Twain**