



Holiday Season in Minnesota

There's no place like home for the holidays. It's a time of year that brings old traditions and special meaning for many Minnesota residents. Families meet for toasts and gifts and holiday feasts. The kitchen becomes a flurry of activity, while family and friends enjoy the warm glow of the fireplace. The candles are lit and the decorations shimmer. Packages appear and the children are happy and excited.

But is your celebration safe?

During the week of
December 24 -
January 1

each year, firefighters respond to nearly 200 structure fires and, on average, three Minnesotans die.



In association with



www.fire.state.mn.us

HOLIDAY FIRE SAFETY



**Ring in a safe
New Year!**

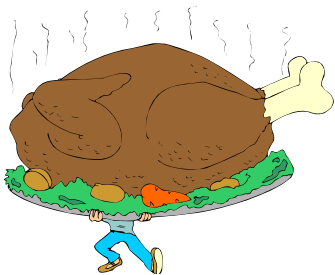
CELEBRATE THE SEASON

What can I do to stay safe?

Fire is generally the result of carelessness, complacency or lack of knowledge. By preparing your home and your family you can have a wonderful holiday, free from disaster.

Holiday Lighting

- Be careful when burning candles. Keep a 12-inch "circle of safety" around candles near trees, wreaths, decorations or other combustible materials. Keep candles out of windows. Do not leave candles unattended.
- Always keep candles, as well as matches and lighters, up high and out of reach of children. Never leave children or pets unattended in a room with a burning candle.
- When you decorate with lights, purchase only those labeled by an approved testing laboratory.
- Outside, use only decorations labeled for outdoor use. Plug them directly into outdoor electrical outlets.
- Always unplug indoor lights before leaving home or going to bed.



Holiday Parties

- Decorate with flame-retardant or non-combustible materials.
- Avoid using candles during parties.
- Provide guests with large, deep ash trays. Dispose of ashes in an empty coffee can with a lid and allow them to sit for 24 hours before tossing them into the trash.
- Cigarette smoking is the leading cause of fire fatalities in Minnesota, and smoking coupled with alcohol is deadly. After a party, check inside and under upholstered furniture and check wastebaskets for cigarette butts that may still be smoldering.

Holiday Decorations



- When you choose a Christmas tree, pull on the needles to test the tree's freshness. If the tree is fresh, it will be hard to pull the needles off.
- Put the tree in a stand that will not tip over. Place the tree well away from heat sources and exits, and water it constantly.
- Make sure all artificial trees are labeled "flame retardant"
- If you have a fire in your fireplace, find another spot to hang Christmas stockings.
- Choose holiday gifts wisely. Pass up those that are highly flammable.
- Dispose of holiday wrappings as soon as you are finished with your gift exchange. Place them into a closed, metal container outdoors.

Holiday Kitchen Safety

- Roll up your sleeves and tuck in loose clothing before cooking.
- Turn pot handles in, and never leave cooking unattended on the stove.
- Make sure appliances are in good working condition and clean them regularly.
- If a pan catches on fire, put a lid on it to smother the flame, and turn off the stove.

Home Protection

- Make sure you have smoke detectors on every level of your home. Test them monthly.
- Prepare and practice a home fire escape plan. GET OUT AND STAY OUT!

Personal Responsibility

Ultimately, we are responsible for our own safety—and often, the safety of others. During the holiday season and always, being careful with fire sets a good example and keeps our celebrations safe and enjoyable.

