

Health Promotion in Motion

Holiday Safety

Keep your home and family safe this holiday season. Remember these tips when burning candles, using holiday lights, lighting your fireplace, or shopping for toys.



Toy Shopping

While these tips apply to gifts for young children, remember that in families with several children, younger children will want to play with an older child's toys.

- **Read the labels** when shopping for toys or any gift for children. Be sure to follow the advice about age and safety.
- **Select presents that are right for the age, ability, skill and interests of the child.** Follow the age recommendations listed on the box.
- **Avoid toys with small parts that can be pulled or broken off.** Choking on and inhaling toy parts are a leading cause of toy-related deaths. Be sure anything you buy for small children is too big to get stuck in the throat, nose, or ears.



- **Look for sturdy construction.** Be sure small parts are tightly attached. That includes the eyes and noses on stuffed animals.
- **Avoid toys with small magnets.** When swallowed, magnets can cause serious injuries or death.
- **Avoid toys with sharp edges and points.**
- **Visit the Consumer Product Safety Commission at www.cpsc.gov** for more information about toy and consumer product safety, and product recalls.

Candles

December is the peak time of year for home fires caused by candles. Remember these safety tips when using candles.

- **Keep an eye on burning candles.** Put out all candles before you go to bed, leave the room, or leave the house.
- **Keep candles away from children and pets.**
- **Keep lighted candles away from items that can easily catch fire,** such as trees, decorations, curtains and furniture.
- **Always use non-flammable candleholders.**



Lights

Twinkling lights are especially beautiful on a cold winter night. Be sure you use them safely.



- **Turn off all holiday lights when you go to bed or leave the house.** Lights can short out and start a fire.
- For indoor or outdoor use, **purchase only lights that bear the name of an independent testing lab** (such as UL or ETL/ITSNA).
- **Follow the package instructions** for installation and maintenance.
- **Check each set of lights, new or old,** for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections. **Throw out damaged sets.**



- Hang or mount light strands carefully to **avoid damaging the cord's insulation.**
- **Do not overload extension cords.**
- **Always unplug lights before replacing light bulbs or fuses.**
- **For outdoor lights, check labels to be sure they have been certified for outdoor use and only plug them into a receptacle that has a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) or a portable GFCI.**

Fireplaces

- **Have the chimney inspected and cleaned** before using the fireplace for the first time in the fall.
- **Before lighting any fire, make sure the flue is open.**
- **Keep all flammable items at least three feet away from the fireplace.** That includes furniture, bedding, clothing, pets, tree branches, and papers.
- **Burn only wood or firelogs approved for fireplace use. Do not burn:**
 - **Trash.** It can float up the chimney and onto the roof or yard. It may also create toxic smoke.
 - **Wrapping paper.** It often contains metals, which can be toxic when burned.
 - **Evergreens or wreaths.** They may flare out of control and send flames and smoke into the room.
- **Keep "fire salts" away from children.** Fire salts produce colored flames when thrown on wood fires. They contain heavy metals and, if eaten, can cause intense vomiting and severe stomach or abdominal pain.
- **Protect your fireplace with a screen or tempered-glass doors.**
- **Before you close the flue, be sure the fire is out.**



More Holiday Safety Information

National Safety Council: www.nsc.org

Consumer Product Safety Commission: www.cpsc.gov

Home Safety Council: www.homesafetycouncil.org

National Fire Protection Association: www.nfpa.org