

MAFES Dawg Tracks



December 14, 2009



Christmas Holiday
Safety



Well, the harvest is complete, the year is almost gone and where did it go? Christmas is almost upon us again and 2010 is coming soon! With that in mind, we need to refurbish our Christmas spirit with a review or refresher on how to be safe so that everyone involved can enjoy another celebration of Christ's Birth – not just the partying, family celebrations, and all the festivities that go along with the season.

Following are some tips that shall help us to enjoy the items mentioned above if we heed these and pass them on to family and friends:

- **Beware of Holiday Candles -**
 - ~Keep candles away from decorations and other combustible materials.
 - ~Do not leave children unattended in the room with lit candles.
 - ~Keep candles, matches, and lighters out of the reach of children.
 - ~Refrain from using candles to decorate Christmas trees.
 - ~Avoid using candles at your parties.
 - ~Never display lighted candles in windows.
- **Test Tree Trimmings -**
 - ~Decorating with lights - be sure to purchase the types that have been tested and labeled by an approved laboratory.
 - ~For outside decorations - use only lights that are labeled for outside use.
 - ~Do not overload electrical outlets - always unplug all lights before leaving home or going to bed.
 - ~Never use electric lights on a metal Christmas tree.
- **Keep Christmas Trees Fresh -**
 - ~Choose a fresh tree and secure it in a sturdy stand.
 - ~Locate the tree away from heat sources and exits - water it daily.
 - ~If you purchase an artificial tree, make sure that it is fire-retardant.
- **Prepare for Holiday Parties -**
 - ~Decorate with flame-retardant or non-combustible materials.
 - ~Avoid using candles at parties.
 - ~If smoking is allowed, furnish sufficient deep ash trays and check them frequently.
 - ~After the party, be sure to check under upholstery furniture, cushions and trash cans for smoldering butts.
- **Designate a Driver -**
 - ~If you are a party attendant, select a driver.
 - ~If you are the host and serving alcohol, you should have non-alcohol beverages for the designated drivers.

- **Inspect Fireplaces -**
 - ~Fireplaces should be cleaned and inspected each year before the start of the heating season. Creosote forms as the wood burns, creating a buildup in the chimney walls that will cause a fire if not properly cleaned.
 - ~Always protect your home and your family by using a sturdy screen when burning fires.
 - ~You should only burn wood and not paper or pine limbs which can float out of the chimney and may ignite in a neighbor's yard.
 - ~Never use flammable liquids in a fireplace.
 - ~If you purchase a factory built fireplace, do so by buying one that has a testing laboratory label and make sure that it is installed according to local standards.
 - ~If stockings are to be hung on the mantle, don't start a fire in the fireplace.
- **Be Cautious with Portable and Space Heaters-**
 - ~Be sure that your wood or coal burning stove has an approved label from a reputable testing laboratory.
 - ~Follow the manufacturer's instructions for proper maintenance and use.
 - ~Locate your wood heat at least 1 meter (3 feet) away from any combustibles including wallpaper, bedding, pets and people.
 - ~Never leave space heaters unattended or leave children in the room where space heaters are used.
 - ~Never dry garments or gloves by laying them on the heaters.
 - ~Be sure to have a floor pad underneath the space heaters to protect the floors.
- **Holiday Shopping Safety -**
 - ~When at all possible, do your shopping in daylight hours.
 - ~Avoid wearing expensive jewelry.
 - ~Refrain from carrying a purse or wallet, and if so, avoid large amounts of cash. Use plastic with a debit or credit for purchases. These are prime targets for criminals in crowded shopping areas, transportation terminals, bus stops and other means of rapid transportation.
 - ~Park in well lit and heavily traveled areas when shopping.
 - ~When shopping, especially at night, it is good to have a shopping "buddy" or partner.
 - ~When you return to your vehicle, check closely to see that there no strangers lurking near.

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Excerpts: www.ou.edu/oupd

<http://crime.about.com>

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