

THE RISK OBSERVER

Safety Information for Residents

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

The holiday season marks the time of year for many celebrations with family and friends, hopefully less work, and more time at home spent cooking, decorating, and entertaining. From a safety perspective, it also marks the time of year for extensive use of fireplaces, heating, and all home appliances. This means there is greater risk of injury and fire. We want you to enjoy these festivities without unfortunate consequence of an accident or loss. Taking the following precautions can greatly reduce the risk associated with the hazards of the holidays.

Cooking

- Never leave the kitchen when cooking on the stovetop or range, and pay close attention to items baking in the oven. Do not rely on a timer; fire can start well before the timer signals.
- Keep the stove surfaces and oven clean. Fire can start by igniting previously spilt food items or built up grease, and always maintain the counter tops by keeping them free of debris and combustible materials like food wrappers/packaging, cookbooks, towels, oven mitts, etc.
- If fire has started on the stove, in the oven, or in a microwave, unplug or turn off the heat source immediately. Keep the oven door closed.
- Make sure you are not wearing any loosely fitted clothing while cooking.
- Teach children to stay at least 3 feet from the stove/oven at all times.
- Keep pot handles turned inward so you don't accidentally bump them, and so children can't grab them.

Decorations

- Use only non-combustible or flame-resistant materials to trim a tree.
- Never use lighted candles on a tree or near other evergreens. Always use non-flammable holders, and place candles where they will not be knocked down.
- In homes with small children, take special care to avoid decorations that are sharp or breakable. Keep trimmings with small removable parts out of the reach of children to avoid choking on small pieces, and avoid trimmings that resemble candy or food that may tempt a child to eat them.
- Follow directions on the product carefully to avoid lung irritation while decorating with artificial snow sprays.
- Check each set of lights, new or old, for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections, and throw out damaged sets.
- Use no more than three standard-size sets of lights per single extension cord.