



How to Prevent Holiday Fires in Your Home

The winter season can be full of wonder and excitement. Mountains begin turning white, Jack Frost nips and fireplaces glow. But the changing season also means new home hazards need to be addressed in order to make it a safe and fun time for all. Each winter tens of thousands of people are affected by fire-related accidents that could have been prevented. By following these simple tips, you will help ensure a safe winter for you and your loved ones.

Fire Safety Tips

- **Watch the stove:** Many are surprised to learn that cooking is the leading cause of most home fires. The good news is that most cooking fires can be prevented. People who are very tired or have consumed alcohol should not use the stove. If you are frying or broiling food make sure you stay close by so you can see the food at all times. Keep pot holders and any flammable materials away from the oven. And never use a stove as a home heating source.
- **Check your smoke detectors:** A majority of home fire deaths occurred in situations without a functional smoke detector. New homes and rentals are required to have smoke detectors but they should be checked at least twice each year. Smoke alarms generally need to be replaced infrequently but you should routinely test the batteries and the number and placement of detectors in your home.
- **Equip your kitchen with a fire extinguisher:** A fire extinguisher should be considered a basic necessity but you should check with a professional when deciding what size and type of extinguisher to buy. Then practice with your fire extinguisher and contact your local fire department should you need assistance or training.
- **Portable heaters should be placed on a non-flammable, level surface at least three feet from anything that can burn.** The National Fire Protection Association indicates that portable heaters,

including wood stoves, were responsible for thirty-two percent of home fires and seventy-nine percent of home heating deaths. (Source: [NFPA](#))

Make sure portable heaters function correctly, are placed in well ventilated areas at all times and are turned off when leaving a room. Many portable heaters now come with automatic shut off switches that provide extra protection. If using a portable heater, make sure it has been tested and certified to exceed minimal safety ratings.

- **Keep holiday lights fun.** Check for loose wires or broken bulbs and keep little ones far from decorative lights and candles. Indoor and outdoor lights should be rated and certified for product safety and used appropriately in each situation – no indoor lights should be used outside, for example. At night, and when you leave your home, please turn off the lights.

Enjoy the Holiday Season!

Most home fires can be avoided. Proper inspection, wise planning and updated safety equipment can help occupants sit back, relax and enjoy the glory of the winter months. Take some time early in the season to prepare to your home so you can experience the holidays without worry or fear of an unwanted fire.