Winter holidays are a time for families and friends to get together. But that also means a greater risk for fire. Following a few simple tips will ensure a happy and fire-safe holiday season.

**HOLIDAY DECORATING**
- Be careful with holiday decorations. Choose decorations that are flame resistant or flame retardant and place away from heat vents.
- Don’t over load electrical outlets with multiple plugs; utilize power strips with surge protection.
- Keep lit candles away from decorations, particularly plastic and synthetic materials used in decorations.
- Some lights are only for indoor use or outdoor use, but not both.
- Replace any sting of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Connect no more than three strands or mini light sets and a maximum of 50 bulbs for screw-in bulbs. Read manufacturer’s instructions for number of LED strands to connect.
- Use clips, not nails, to hang lights so the cords do not get damaged.
- Do not block exits. Ensure that trees and decorations do not block an exit way. By keeping decorations away from windows and doors you are maintaining accessible means of egress to the outside.

**HOLIDAY ENTERTAINING**
- Test your smoke alarms and tell guests about your home fire escape plan.
- Keep children and pets away from lit candles.
- Keep matches and lighters out of the reach of children in a locked cabinet.
- Please stop unattended cooking; always stay in the kitchen when cooking with any type of appliance.
- Ask smokers to smoke outside. Remind smokers to keep their smoking materials with them so young children do not touch them.
- Provide large, deep ashtrays for smokers. Wet cigarette butts with water before discarding.
- Check the cushions of your furniture to make certain that there is nothing lit that could smolder and catch fire, perhaps later on while you are sleeping.

**BEFORE HEADING OUT OR TO BED**
- **Always Blow out** lit candles when you leave the room or go to bed.
- **Always Turn off** all light strings and decorations before leaving home or going to bed.

**CHRISTMAS TREE SAFETY**
- A freshly cut tree should have a trunk that is sticky to the touch and needles that do not break or fall off.
- If you are using a real tree keep the tree watered. Typically a well-watered tree is not a problem, but a dry neglected tree can be.
- Do not place your tree to close to a heat source. The heat will dry out the tree making it more susceptible to heat, flames or sparks.
- Never go near a Christmas tree with an open flame.
- When the tree has become dry and no longer absorbs water it is time to discard it promptly.
- If you are using an artificial tree make sure it is FLAME RETARDANT.

**FACTS**
NFPA data indicates an estimated 390 home fires occur each year due to holiday decorations and/or Christmas trees.

These fires resulted in 21 fatalities and over $25 million dollars in property damage.

50% of holiday decoration fires happen due to the decorations being placed too close to a heat source.

More than ½ of all December home decoration fires are started by candles.