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**The Newsladder
and The Tallahassee Fire Department
Present:**



**The Newsladder
Special Holiday Edition— Holiday Season Safety**

Special points of interest:

- Half of all candle fires start because something that can burn is too close to the candle.
- Approximately 40% of all Christmas tree fires are caused by electrical problems or malfunctions.
- Home heating fires are the second leading cause of home fires.
- TFD has two regional Hazardous Material response teams.

The winter holidays are a time for celebration, and that means more cooking, home decorating, entertaining, and an increased risk of fire due to heating equipment. Article information provided by www.nfpa.org.

Facts and Figures

- In 2004, there were 200 Christmas tree fires in U.S. homes, resulting in 17 injuries and \$16 million in direct property damage. No deaths were reported.
- During 2000-2004, an average

300 home fires started when Christmas trees ignited. These fires caused an estimated annual average of 14 civilian deaths, 21 civilian injuries and \$16.8 million in direct property damage.

- During 2004, an estimated 17,200 home fires started by candles were reported to public fire departments. These fires resulted in an estimated 200 civilian deaths, 1,540 civilian injuries and an estimated direct property loss of \$200 million.

• Fourteen percent of the candle fires occurred in December. This is almost twice the 8% monthly average. Christmas was the peak day for home candle fires. Seventeen percent of the home fires reported on Christmas were started by candles.

- In 14% of the December candle fires, the fires began when a decoration caught fire. This was true in only 5% of the fires during the rest of the year.

This issue is dedicated to making your holidays a little safer.

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Candles

During 2005, an estimated 15,600 home structure fires started by candles were reported to local fire departments. These fires resulted in an estimated 150 civilian deaths, 1,270 civilian injuries and an estimated direct property loss of \$539 million. Homes include dwellings, duplexes, manufactured housing and apartments.

Facts and Figures

- Although home candle fires fell 8% from 2004 to 2005, more than twice as many were reported in 2005 as in 1990.
- Candle fires accounted for an estimated 4% of all reported home fires in 2005.
- Thirty-eight percent (38%) of home candle fires started in the bedroom, resulting in 41% of the associated civilian deaths.

- December is the peak time of year for home candle fires. In December, 13% of home candle fires began with decorations compared to 4% the rest of the year.
- More than half of all candle fires started when something that could burn, such as furniture, mattresses or bedding, curtains, or decorations, was too close to the candle.

- Falling asleep was a factor in 12% of home candle fires and 26% of the associated deaths.
- The top five days for home candle fires were Christmas, Christmas Eve, New Year's Day, New Year's Eve, and Halloween.

National Fire Protection Agency Candle Safety Tips:

- Extinguish all candles when leaving the room or going to sleep.

- Keep candles at least 1 foot away from things that can catch fire, like clothing, books and curtains.
- Use candle holders that are sturdy, won't tip over easily, are made from a material that cannot burn, and are large enough to collect dripping wax.

- Keep candles and all open flames away from flammable liquids.
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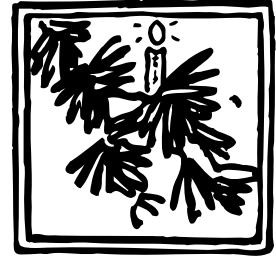
Never leave a candle burning unattended. Blow out before you leave out.

Candles

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- Keep candle wicks trimmed to one-quarter inch and extinguish taper and pillar candles when they get to within two inches of the holder. Votives and containers should be extinguished before the last half-inch of wax starts to melt.
- During power outages, avoid carrying a lit candle. Use flashlights.

NFPA discourages the use of candles in bedrooms and sleeping areas.



Electric candles may be used in lieu of real ones for holiday decorating.

Keep a closer eye on indoor pets during the holidays as they can knock over holiday decorations and/or chew on wiring causing a potential fire hazard.



Real Christmas trees smell great but can pose a huge fire hazard if not maintained properly.

Christmas Trees

Carefully decorating Christmas trees can help make your holidays safer. **Note:** These statistics are based on fires that started with Christmas trees and do not include fires starting with other products. A small fire that spreads to a Christmas tree can very quickly become large.

Facts and Figures

- Christmas trees were the items first ignited in an estimated average of 300 reported U.S. home structure fires per year in 2000-2004. These fires caused an average of 14 civilian deaths, 21 civilian injuries, and \$16.8 million in direct property damage per year. These statistics include both real and artificial trees.
- On average, one in every 22 reported home Christmas tree fires resulted in a death.
- More than four of every ten home Christmas tree fires are caused by electrical problems or malfunctions. One in four (24%) home Christmas tree fires resulted from a heat source placed too close to the tree.
- Holiday lights (or other decorative lighting with live voltage) were involved in 16% of the home Christmas tree structure fires. Fixed or port-

able space heaters were involved in 6% of these incidents.

- Candles were the heat source in 12% of the home Christmas tree fires per year between 2000 and 2004.

Ten Tips for Making your Tree Fire Safe

1. When decorating your tree, always use lights listed by a testing laboratory. Some lights are designed only for indoor or outdoor use, but not both. Larger tree lights should also have some type of reflector rather than a bare bulb.
2. Follow the manufacturer's instructions on how to use tree lights. Any string of lights with worn, frayed or broken cords or loose bulb connections should not be used. Connect no more than three strands of push-in bulbs and a maximum of 50 bulbs for screw-in bulbs.
3. Always unplug Christmas tree lights before leaving home or going to bed.
4. Bring outdoor electrical lights inside after the holidays to prevent hazards and extend their life.
5. Never use lit candles to
6. Try to keep live trees as moist as possible by giving them plenty of water daily. Do not purchase a tree that is dry or dropping needles. Check for fresh, green needles. And place your tree in a sturdy tree stand designed not to tip over.
7. If you purchase an artificial tree, be sure it is labeled as fire-retardant.
8. Children are fascinated with Christmas trees. Keep a watchful eye on them when around the tree and do not let them play with the wiring or lights. Store matches and lighters up high, out of reach.
9. Make sure the tree is at least three feet (one meter) away from any heat source, such as fireplaces and radiators. Try to position the tree near an outlet so that cords are not running long distances.
10. Safely dispose of the tree when it begins dropping needles. Dried-out trees are highly flammable and should not be left in a house or garage, or placed against the house.

decorate a tree, and make sure any lit candles in the room are placed well away from tree branches.

Turkey Frying

Turkeys are a delicious part of most holiday meals. If you are going to fry your turkey be aware of the potential safety hazards associated with this cooking method.

- Hot oil may splash or spill at any point during the cooking process, when the fryer is jarred or tipped over, the turkey is placed in the fryer or removed, or the turkey is moved from the fryer to the table. Any contact between hot oil and skin could result in serious injury. Any contact between hot oil and nonmetallic materials could lead to serious damage.
- A major spill of hot oil can

occur with fryers designed for outdoor use and using a stand, as these units are particularly vulnerable to upset or collapse, followed by a major spill of hot oil. Newer countertop units using a solid base appear to reduce this particular risk.

- In deep frying, oil is heated to temperatures of 350 degrees Fahrenheit or more. Cooking oil is combustible, and if it is heated beyond its cooking temperature, its vapors can ignite. This is a fire danger separate from the burn danger inherent in the hot oil. Overheating can occur if temperature controls, which are designed to shut off the fryer if the oil over-

heats, are defective, or if the appliance has no temperature controls.

- Propane-fired turkey fryers are designed for outdoor use, particularly for Thanksgiving. If rain or snow strikes exposed hot cooking oil, the result can be a splattering of the hot oil or a conversion of the rain or snow to steam, either of which can lead to burns. Use of propane fired turkey fryers indoors to avoid bad weather is contrary to their design and dangerous in its own right. Fires have occurred when turkey fryers were used in a garage or barn or under eaves to keep the appliance out of the rain.

- The approximately 5 gallons of oil in these devices introduce an additional level of hazard to deep fryer cooking, as does the size and weight of the turkey, which must be safely lowered into and raised out of the large quantity of hot oil. Many turkeys are purchased frozen, and they may not be fully thawed when cooking begins. As with a rainy day, a defrosting turkey creates the risk of contact between hot cooking oil.



Heating your House

Heating equipment is a leading cause of home fires during the months of December, January and February (43% of home fires during this timeframe), and trails only cooking equipment in home fires year-round.

Facts and Figures

- In 2003, heating equipment was involved in an estimated 53,200 reported U.S. home structure fires, with associated losses of 260 civilian

deaths, 1,260 civilian injuries, and \$494 million in direct property damage.

- In 2003 heating equipment fires accounted for 14% of all reported home fires (second behind cooking) and 8% of home fire deaths.
- Space heaters, were involved in 26% of the home heating fires but 73% of the deaths.

- Heating equipment too close to things that can burn, such as upholstered furniture, clothing, mattress, or bedding, is by far the leading factor contributing to home heating fires (28%) and home heating fire deaths (50%).
- Chimneys and chimney connectors accounted for the largest share (40%) of home heating fire incidents. Failure to clean accounted for over half (59%) of the confined

chimney and chimney connector fires.

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Meet a TFD Employee: Lt. Zeb Daniels

After spending over 22 years in Suppression, Lt. Daniels joined the Training Division staff last month. During his career he worked at Stations 1 and 3 as a Firefighter. Promoted in 1986 to Driver/Operator he drove Tanker 1, Engine 1 and Squad 1. Since making Lieutenant in 1997, he has worked at several of the 15 stations. He now oversees the Hazardous Materials program, ensuring our Haz-

Mat teams get the training and supplies needed to handle not only local incidents but regional ones as well. He not only is the coordinator but is a team member as well.

Married 23 years to Ginger, they have two daughters, Jessica, 20 and Ashley, 17. In addition, he is a proud grandpa of Daniel, 4 and Chase, 6 months.

He considers being spotlighted in *The Newsladder* an honor and added, "I consider my career at TFD to be my greatest accomplishment in life next to my family, and the friendships and camaraderie I have enjoyed here will stay with me long after retirement. Truly, being a firefighter is not just a job, it is an adventure."



Heating your House

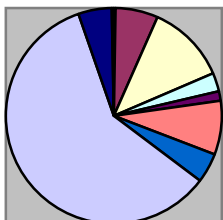
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NFPA Heating Safety Tips

- When buying a new space heater, make sure it carries the mark of an independent testing laboratory and is legal for use in your community.
- Install your stationary (fixed) space heater according to manufacturer's instructions or applicable codes or better yet, have it installed by a professional.
- Plug your electric-powered space heater into an outlet with sufficient capacity and never into an extension cord.
- Use the proper grade of the proper fuel for your liquid-fueled space heater, and never use gasoline in any heater not approved for gasoline use. Refuel only in a well-ventilated area and when the equipment is cool.
- In your fireplace or wood stove, use only dry, seasoned wood to avoid the build-up of creosote, an oily deposit that easily catches fire and accounts for most chimney fires and the largest share of home heating fires generally. Use only paper or kindling wood, not a flammable liquid, to start the fire. Do not use artificial logs in wood stoves.
- Make sure your fireplace has a sturdy screen to prevent sparks from flying into the room. Allow fireplace and woodstove ashes to cool before disposing in a metal container, which is kept a safe distance from your home.
- Turn off space heaters whenever the room they are in is unoccupied or under circumstances when manufacturer's instructions say they should be turned off. Portable space heaters are so easy to knock over in the dark that they should be turned off when you go to bed, but make sure your primary heating equipment for the bedrooms is sufficient to avoid risks to residents from severe cold.
- Do not use your oven to heat your home.
- Make sure fuel-burning equipment is vented to the outside, that the venting is kept clear and unobstructed, and that the exit point is properly sealed around the vent, all of which is to make sure deadly carbon monoxide does not build up in the home.

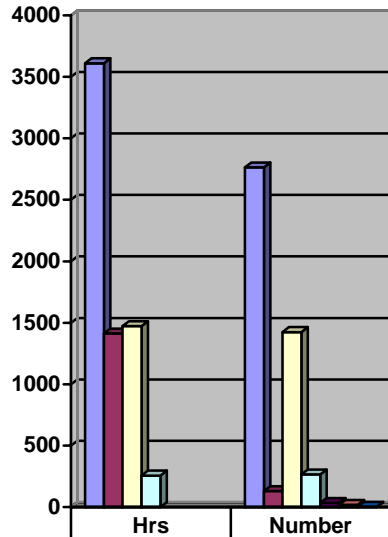
TFD by the Numbers: Fiscal Year 2007

Total Calls- 23601



Airport Alerts- 48	Brush/Rubbish- 1536
Building Alarms- 2800	Structure Fires- 664
Vehicle Fires- 314	Vehicle Rescues-1891
Hazard Invest.- 1078	Medical- 13996
Service- 1194	Misc. Rescue-80

Fire Prevention Stats



Activity	Hrs	Number
Inspection	3611	2763
Investigation	1414	129
Plans review	1472	1425
Public Ed	256	266
Burn Permits		34
Arrests		18
Fire Deaths		2

Other Activities

- Meals on Wheels:
Meals delivered - 514
- Station Tours and Displays
- Routine Blood Pressure Checks
- Standbys for Community Events and FSU home games

THE CITY OF TALLAHASSEE AND
THE TALLAHASSEE FIRE DEPART-
MENT PRESENT:

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Tallahassee, FL 32301



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**Did you change your smoke alarm batteries
when you changed your clock? Remember
"Change your Clock, Change your Batter-
ies."**

TFD Goes to the Fair



TFD Recruitment Display at North Florida Fair



Lt. Iris Carter at the Fire Prevention Display at North Florida Fair