

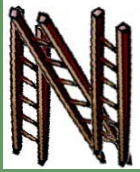
Volume: 7

Issue: 6

November/December 2009



The City of Tallahassee
and The Tallahassee Fire Department
Present:



The Newsladder

Special Holiday Edition

Tis the Season for Trees, Cooking, and Candles...

As the holiday season nears, many people are preparing themselves for holiday fun as well as the cold weather. In anticipation of "old man winter," many people are purchasing space heaters, candles, and wood for the fireplace. However, there are quite a few dangers involved with the use of alternative heating sources in the home.

According to the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), "heating is second only to cooking as the leading cause of residential structure fires. Additionally, more than half of residential heating fires are due to mechanical failure. In one- and two-family residences, one-third of heating fires results from improper maintenance of heating equipment."

In most cases, the number of heating related fires are increased in the winter months due to cold weather, yet, the addition of holiday decorations in the home also plays a major role in the increased amount of home fires during this time.

USFA stated, "in residential structure fires where the ignition point is a Christmas tree or other holiday decoration, the fire is typically more severe in every measurable way."

Each year, fire departments respond to an average of 210 structure fires caused by Christmas trees. Carefully decorating Christmas trees can help make your holidays safer.

Christmas Tree Safety Tips

Picking the tree

- If you have an artificial tree, be sure it is labeled, certified, or identified by the manufacturer as fire retardant.
- Choose a tree with fresh, green needles that do not fall off when touched.

Placing the tree

- Before placing the tree in the stand, cut 1–2" from the base of the trunk.
- Make sure the tree is at least three feet away from any heat source, like fireplaces, radiators, candles, heat vents or lights.
- Make sure the tree is not blocking an exit.
- Add water to the tree stand. Be sure to add water daily.

Lighting the tree

- Use lights that have the label of an independent testing laboratory. Some lights are only for indoor or outdoor use, but not both.
- Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Connect no more than three strands of mini string sets and a maximum of 50 bulbs for screw-in bulbs.
- Never use lit candles to decorate the tree.
- Always turn off Christmas tree lights before leaving home or going to bed.

After Christmas

Get rid of the tree when it begins dropping needles. Dried-out trees are a fire

danger and should not be left in the home or garage, or placed outside against the home. Check with your local community to find a recycling program. Bring outdoor electrical lights inside after the holidays to prevent hazards and make them last longer.

Cooking

Cooking fires are the #1 cause of home fires and home fire injuries. Nearly all cooking equipment fires start with the ignition of food, other cooking materials (e.g., grease, cooking oil), or other items normally found or installed in a kitchen (e.g., cabinets, wall coverings, paper or plastic bags, curtains).

Facts & figures

- In 2005, U.S. fire departments responded to 146,400 home structure fires that involved cooking equipment in 2005. These fires caused 480 civilian fire deaths, 4,690 civilian fire injuries and \$876 million in direct property damage.
- Cooking equipment fires are the leading cause of home structure fires and associated civilian injuries. These fires accounted for 40% of all reported home structure fires in 2005 and 36% of home civilian injuries.
- Twelve percent of the fires occurred when something that could catch fire was too close to the equipment.
- Thanksgiving is the peak day for home cooking fires.



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Tis the Season

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Cooking Safety Tips

- Be on alert! If you are sleepy or have consumed alcohol don't use the stove or stovetop.
- Stay in the kitchen while you are frying, grilling, or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove.
- If you are simmering, baking, roasting, or boiling food, check it regularly, remain in the home while food is cooking, and use a timer to remind you that you are cooking.



Candle Safety Tips

“CANDLE WITH CARE”

- Blow out all candles when you leave the room or go to bed. Avoid the use of candles in the

bedroom and other areas where people may fall asleep.

- Keep candles at least 12 inches away from anything that can burn.

If you do burn candles, make sure that you...

- Use candle holders that are sturdy, and won't tip over easily.
- Put candle holders on a sturdy, uncluttered surface.
- Light candles carefully. Keep your hair and any loose clothing away from the flame.
- Don't burn a candle all the way down — put it out before it gets too close to the holder or container.
- Never use a candle if oxygen is used in the home.
- Have flashlights and battery-powered lighting ready to use during a

power outage. Never use candles.

- Never leave a child alone in a room with a burning candle. Keep matches and lighters up high and out of children's reach, in a locked cabinet.

Candle Facts

- On average, a candle fire in the home is reported to a U.S. fire department every **34** minutes.
- Thirty-eight percent (**38%**) of home candle fires started in the bedroom.
- More than half of all candle fires start when things that can burn are too close to the candle.

www.nfpa.org

Toy Safety Tips for Santa's Helpers

WHEN BUYING TOYS

- Choose toys with care. Keep in mind the child's age, interests and skill level.
- Look for quality design and construction in all toys for all ages.
- Make sure that all directions or instructions are clear -- to you, and, when appropriate, to the child.
- Plastic wrappings on toys should be discarded at once before they become deadly playthings.
- Be a label reader. Look for and heed age recommendations, such as "Not recommended for children under three". Look for other safety labels including: "Flame retardant/Flame resistant" on fabric products and "Washable/hygienic materials" on stuffed toys and dolls.



ALL TOYS ARE NOT FOR ALL CHILDREN

Keep toys designed for older children out of the hands of little ones. Follow labels that give age recommendations -- some toys are recommended for older children because they may be hazardous in the hands of a younger child. Teach older children to help keep their toys away from younger brothers and sisters.

ELECTRIC TOYS

Electric toys that are improperly constructed, wired or misused can shock or burn. Electric toys must meet mandatory requirements for maximum surface temperatures, electrical construction and prominent warning labels. Electric toys with heating elements are recommended only for children over eight years old. Children should be taught to use electric toys properly, cautiously and under adult supervision.



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

The Newsladder
Tallahassee Fire Department
327 North Adams Street
Tallahassee, FL 32301



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WWW.TALGOV.COM

The Newsladder is a publication of the
Tallahassee Fire Department
Intended For
The Citizens of Tallahassee

Cindy Dick, Fire Chief
Mona Pearson, Editor and Contributing Writer
Email: Mona.Pearson@talgov.com
Phone: 850-891-6600
Fax: 850-891-6606