

HOLIDAY SAFETY

TALK SAFETY TO ME TOOLBOX TALKS

Talking Points

The holiday season is a time for family, friends, and celebration. Unfortunately, it is also a time when home fires, electrical hazards, and foodborne illnesses increase. Taking a few extra precautions can help ensure everyone enjoys a safe and healthy holiday season.

Christmas Tree Safety

If not properly maintained, a Christmas tree can become a serious fire hazard.

Safety Tips:

- Choose a fresh tree with green needles that do not fall off easily.
- Place the tree at least 3 feet away from fireplaces, space heaters, radiators, candles, and other heat sources.
- Water the tree daily. Use a sturdy tree stand that holds plenty of water. A dry tree can ignite quickly and burn rapidly.
- Never burn tree branches or wrapping paper in the fireplace.
- Remove the tree promptly after the holiday season or when it begins to dry out.

Holiday Lights and Electrical Safety

Overloaded circuits are one of the leading causes of holiday-related fires.

Safety Tips:

- Inspect light strings for damaged cords, broken sockets, or frayed wires before use.
- Replace damaged decorations immediately.
- Do not overload outlets, extension cords, or power strips.
- Follow the manufacturer's recommendations for the maximum number of light strands that can be connected.
- Use outdoor-rated lights and extension cords for exterior decorations.
- Turn off Christmas lights before going to bed or leaving the house.
- Keep electrical cords out of walkways to prevent trip hazards.

Warning signs of overloading – warm or hot outlets, tripping breakers, and burning smells. Immediately unplug decorations if you notice any of the warning signs.

Food Safety

Foodborne illness increases during the holiday months because so many people are preparing large meals.

Safety Tips:

- Wash hands thoroughly before handling food.
- Keep raw meat separate from ready-to-eat foods.
- Cook poultry to an internal temperature of 165°F.
- Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours of serving.
- Use clean cutting boards and utensils.
- Thaw frozen foods safely in the refrigerator, cold water, or microwave. Never thaw food on the counter. Bacteria can grow rapidly in foods left in temperatures between 40 and 140 degrees.
- When in doubt, throw it out.

Review Questions

1. How often should a live Christmas tree be watered?
2. Why should Christmas lights be turned off before going to bed?
3. How long can holiday leftovers safely sit out before they should be refrigerated?
4. What would you do if you noticed damaged or frayed holiday light cords?
5. What's one holiday safety tip your family already follows at home?