

# CITY OF OCEANSIDE

## OCEANSIDE FIRE DEPARTMENT

### COOKING AND FIRE SAFETY

As you plan your holiday menu don't forget about fire safety. Did you know that the number of home fires double during the holidays? So, let's add a pinch of fire safety to the menu. Keep these safety tips in mind as you prepare your meal.

#### Turkey:

If you're roasting your turkey, make sure you set a timer. This way, you won't forget about the bird as you visit with your relatives, watch your holiday movies or text and call your friends and family. If you're frying your turkey:

- Use a fryer with thermostat controls. This will ensure the oil does not become over heated.
- Thaw your turkey completely. Ice on the bird will cause the oil to splatter. Make sure you dry a wet turkey before placing it in the hot oil.
- Don't overfill the pot with oil. If you do, the oil will overflow when you add the turkey causing a fire hazard.
- Keep children and pets at least three feet away from the fryer.
- Also, always use the fryer outdoors.

#### Stuffing and Potatoes:

Stand by your stove when you're boiling your potatoes or frying onions for stuffing. It is best to stay in the kitchen when you're frying, boiling or broiling. If you're in the kitchen, it is easier to catch spills or hazardous conditions before they become a fire.

#### Vegetables:

- Keep the area around the stove clear of packaging, paper towels, and dish cloths; anything that can burn.
- Be sure to clean up any spills as they happen.
- Be prepared. Keep a large pan lid or baking sheet handy in case you need to smother a pan fire.
- Turn pot handles towards the back of the stove so you don't bump them.

By following these safety tips, you will have a delicious and fire safe holiday season.

### DECORATING AND FIRE SAFETY

#### *Trees, Lights, and Fireplaces Create a Festive Mix for Disaster*



Before crawling up on the roof to string the Christmas lights, you need to know that every year, hospital emergency rooms treat about 12,500 people for injuries, such as falls, cuts and shocks, related to holiday lights, decorations and Christmas trees, according to the [U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission](#) (CPSC).

In addition, candles start about 11,600 each year, resulting in 150 deaths, 1,200 injuries and \$173 million in property loss. Christmas trees are involved in about 300 home fires annually, resulting in 10 deaths, 30 injuries and an average of more than \$10 million in property loss and damage.

"Sometimes people are having such a nice time during the holidays that they forget to extinguish candles," said CPSC Chairman Hal Stratton. "Always put out lit candles before leaving a room or going to bed. Always keep burning candles within sight. Also, make sure your holiday lights bear the mark of a recognized testing lab to show they meet safety standards."

Since CPSC started monitoring holiday lights and decorations sold at stores nationwide, inspectors have prevented the import of 116,500 units of holiday lights that did not meet safety standards.

## CPSC tips to make your holiday a safe one:

### Christmas Trees:

- When purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label “Fire Resistant.” Although this label does not mean the tree won’t catch fire, it does indicate the tree will resist burning and should extinguish quickly.
- When purchasing a live tree, check for freshness. A fresh tree is green, needles are hard to pull from branches and do not break when bent between your fingers. The trunk butt of a fresh tree is sticky with resin, and when tapped on the ground, the tree should not lose many needles.
- When setting up a tree at home, place it away from fireplaces and radiators. Because heated rooms dry live trees out rapidly, be sure to keep the stand filled with water. Place the tree out of the way of traffic and do not block doorways.

### Holiday Lights:

- Indoors or outside, use only lights that have been tested for safety by a recognized testing laboratory, which indicates conformance with safety standards. Use only lights that have fused plugs.
- Check each set of lights, new or old, for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections, and throw out damaged sets. Always replace burned-out bulbs promptly with the same wattage bulbs.
- Use no more than three standard-size sets of lights per single extension cord. Make sure the extension cord is rated for the intended use.
- Never use electric lights on a metallic tree. The tree can become charged with electricity from faulty lights, and a person touching a branch could be electrocuted.
- Before using lights outdoors, check labels to be sure they have been certified for outdoor use.
- Stay away from power or feeder lines leading from utility poles into older homes.
- Fasten outdoor lights securely to trees, house walls, or other firm supports to protect the lights from wind damage. Use only insulated staples to hold strings in place, not nails or tacks. Or, run strings of lights through hooks (available at hardware stores).

- Turn off all holiday lights when you go to bed or leave the house. The lights could short out and start a fire.
- Use caution when removing outdoor holiday lights. Never pull or tug on lights - they could unravel and inadvertently wrap around power lines.
- Outdoor electric lights and decorations should be plugged into circuits protected by ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). Portable outdoor GFCIs can be purchased where electrical supplies are sold. GFCIs can be installed permanently to household circuits by a qualified electrician.

### Holiday Decorations:

- Use only non-combustible or flame-resistant materials to trim a tree. Choose tinsel or artificial icicles of plastic or nonleaded metals. Leaded materials are hazardous if ingested by children.
  - Never use lighted candles on a tree or near other evergreens. Always use non-flammable holders, and place candles where they will not be knocked down.
  - In homes with small children, take special care to avoid decorations that are sharp or breakable, keep trimmings with small removable parts out of the reach of children to avoid the child swallowing or inhaling small pieces, and avoid trimmings that resemble candy or food that may tempt a child to eat them.
  - Wear gloves to avoid eye and skin irritation while decorating with spun glass “angel hair.”
  - Follow container directions carefully to avoid lung irritation while decorating with artificial snow sprays.
- ### Fireplaces:
- Use care with “fire salts,” which produce colored flames when thrown on wood fires. They contain heavy metals that can cause intense gastrointestinal irritation and vomiting if eaten. Keep them away from children.
  - Do not burn wrapping paper in the fireplace. A flash fire may result as wrappings ignite suddenly and burn intensely.

*Happy Holidays!*