



## CHRISTMAS & HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS

Christmas and the holidays are an exciting and busy time but with all the joys of the holiday season come potential safety hazards that can cause injury or even death. Help prevent injuries at Christmas and during the holidays by following these tips.

#### Christmas Trees

- Christmas tree safety begins with the selection and purchase of a fresh tree.
- When buying a live pre-cut tree, make sure the tree is still alive and healthy. A fresh tree is green, needles are hard to pull from the branches, and when bent between your fingers, needles do not break. Pull on the needles. If the needles come off easily, it is probably not in great condition. The trunk should be sticky and the limbs should be very flexible. Lift the tree and bounce the cut end on the ground, if a bunch of needles come tumbling off, it isn't a safe tree to take home.
- When you get the Christmas tree home, cut off the bottom two inches of trunk to expose the fresh wood. This will create a fresh, raw cut for the tree to soak in water, allow for better water absorption, and help to keep your tree from drying out and becoming a fire hazard. If you don't do this, the trunk may not be able to drink in the water in the Christmas tree stand.
- Keeping your thirsty Christmas tree well hydrated is the best way to prevent a tree fire. Keep the water in the stand well above the freshcut bottom of the trunk. There are products also available to help you keep your Christmas tree from getting too thirsty.

- When purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label "Fire Resistant".
- Christmas trees dry out with heat, so place your tree away from heat sources like the fireplace or heater vents. The cooler the Christmas tree stays, the better.
- The longer your Christmas tree stays in the house, the more it dries and becomes a fire hazard. Dispose of your Christmas tree in a timely manner following Christmas.

## Christmas Lights - Inside and Outside

- Unplug the lights and decorations when you are not home, or they are otherwise not in use. Heat + a pine tree = house fire. The lights could short out and start a fire. The trees are highly flammable. Turn off all lights when you go to bed.
- Check each set of tree lights for frayed wires, broken bulbs, and loose connections. Turn off lights before you go to bed or leave the house.
- Never run electrical cords under carpets or rugs, over nails, in traffic areas, or where there is a chance of water.
- 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. To hold lights in place, string them through hooks or insulated staples, not nails or tacks. Never pull or tug lights to remove them. Check all tree lights-even if you've just purchased them-before hanging them on your tree. Make sure all the bulbs work and that there are no frayed wires, broken sockets or loose connections.
- Plug all outdoor electric decorations into circuits with ground fault circuit interrupters to avoid potential shocks.

- Also, be sure to check all cords and plugs prior to using them for the year, for wear and tear. Throw out and replace any that look as though they are starting to fray or show bare wires. The smallest spark can possibly result in a very large disaster.
- Make sure all external electrical decorations are well protected.
   Keep them away from moisture, and especially keep them aware from moisture and sale.
- Never overload an electrical receptacle with extension cords or three-way adapters. If you need to plug a lot of things into a single receptacle, use a power strip.
- Don't pull on an electrical cord to unplug it. Grasp the plug firmly and pull out straight so you don't bend the prongs.
- Replace any cord or plug that is cracked or discolored or feels hot to the touch when in use. If the original wire or plug is polarized (one prong is wider than the other), or if it has a third grounding prong, replace it with similar equipment.
- Call an electrician if your lights flicker and your appliances run sluggishly, or if you have a fuse that repeatedly blows or a circuit breaker that trips often. These are signs that the system is overloaded.

#### **Christmas Decorations**

- Use only non-combustible or flame-resistant materials to trim a tree. Choose tinsel or artificial icicles of plastic or nonleaded metals.
- 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 young child to eat them.

- Remove all wrapping papers, bags, paper, ribbons and bows from tree and fireplace areas after gifts are opened. These items can pose suffocation and choking hazards to a small child or can cause a fire if near flame.

## Christmas Toy Safety

- Select toys to suit the age, abilities, skills and interest level of the intended child. Toys too advanced may pose safety hazards for younger children.
- Before buying a toy or allowing your child to play with a toy that he has received as a gift, read the instructions carefully.
- To prevent both burns and electrical shocks, don't give young children (under age ten) a toy that must be plugged into an electrical outlet. Instead, buy toys that are battery-operated.
- Children under age three can choke on small parts contained in toys or games. Government regulations specify that toys for children under age three cannot have parts less than 1 1/4 inches in diameter and 2 1/4 inches long.
- Children under age 8 can choke or suffocate on uninflated or broken balloons. Remove strings and ribbons from toys before giving them to young children.
- Watch for pull toys with strings that are more than 12 inches in length. They could be a strangulation hazard for babies.

## Happy Visiting At Christmas And The Holidays

- Clean up immediately after a holiday party. A toddler could rise early and choke on leftover food or come in contact with alcohol or tobacco.
- Remember that the homes you visit may not be childproofed. Keep an eye out for danger spots.
- Traveling, visiting family members, getting presents, shopping, etc., can all increase your child's stress levels. Trying to stick to your

child's usual routines, including sleep schedules and timing of naps, can help you and your child enjoy the holidays and reduce stress.

## Fireplace Safety During The Holidays

- Before lighting any fire, remove all greens, boughs, papers, and other decorations from fireplace area. Check to see that the flue is open.
- 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 papers in the fireplace. A flash fire may result as wrappings ignite suddenly and burn intensely.

## Prevent Theft & Break-ins During The Holidays

Santa comes down the chimney, not through the door or windows. Keep those locked and your <u>blinds</u> drawn when you aren't home or are sleeping/otherwise occupied. Most home burglaries happen this time of year, and it would be awful to have the presents stolen along with your other treasured possessions.

### Christmas Safety Tips For Children & When You Have A Baby In The House

- Keep holiday plants away from children and pets. Mistletoe, holly berries, and Christmas cactus are poisonous if swallowed.
- If you place your child in a shopping cart, always use the safety belt and never let your child stand in or push a shopping cart.
- As pointed out "Toy Safety" described above, do not give children under the age of 3 toys that contain small or metal parts or toys that break easily. An easy gauge us using an empty toilet paper roll. If a toy can fit through the roll it is too small for the child.
- Include helmets and other protective gear when giving bicycles, skates, or skateboards.

- When Christmastime approaches, you are probably looking forward to celebrating the season with your baby. This may be your baby's first Christmas or the first real Christmas they may realize what is going on. As you prepare for Christmastime around your house, you need to realize that there may be several hazards for your baby. This is especially true if you have an older baby who is crawling or walking. You need to be mindful of your baby and keep your house safe during Christmas.
- Here are some ways that you can baby proof your house during Christmas and keep your baby safe and secure.
- Keep the Christmas candles to a minimum or just don't light them. Candles can be really pretty at Christmastime, but they can also be really dangerous. If you love Christmas candles, think about using electric candles or light bulbs instead for the glow. If you still want to decorate your home with Christmas candles, just don't light them. A baby can grab a candle and get burned badly. If you do burn a candle for Christmas, make sure it is completely out of reach of your baby and there is no way that it can fall over by pulling on a table cloth or doiley.
- Don't ever leave your baby unattended with a Christmas tree. Keep all your cords and breakable ornaments out of reach of baby. If your baby is crawling, make sure to place the breakable ornaments higher than they can reach, and the same goes for walking. If your baby is walking, you may just want to keep your breakable Christmas ornaments in the box this year. Make sure that the Christmas tee is anchored so that your baby can't flip it over. Don't place wrapped presents under the tree where your baby can reach them. The wrapping paper and bows will go straight into your baby's mouth and they can choke on it.



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Sources American Academy of Pediatrics; SafeUSA; U.S. Fire Administration; Christmas Safety Tips When You Have A Baby In The House, by Tiffany B.; Christmas-Safety-Chris.pirillo.com.; About.com.firstaid; Reader'sDigest.Com

# Playground Safety

Each year, more than 200,000 children go to U.S. hospital emergency rooms with injuries associated with playground equipment. Use this simple checklist, provided by the consumer Product Safety Commission, to help make sure your local community or school playground is a safe place to play.

- √ Make sure surfaces around playground equipment have at least
  12 inches of wood chips, mulch, sand, or pea gravel, or are mats made
  of safety-tested rubber.
- √ Check that protective surfacing extends at least 6 feet in all directions from play equipment. For swings, be sure surfacing extends, in back and front, twice the height of the suspending bar.
- $\sqrt{\phantom{a}}$  Check for dangerous hardware, like open "S" hooks or protruding bolt ends.
- √ Make sure elevated surfaces, like platforms and ramps, have guardrails to prevent falls.
- $\sqrt{\phantom{a}}$  Look out for tripping hazards, like exposed concrete footings, tree stumps, and rocks.
- √ Make sure play structures more than 30 inches high are spaced at least 9 feet apart.



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# Tips for Bicycle Safety

√ Always wear a helmet that meets the safety standards developed by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission



- √ Make sure the helmet is comfortable and snug and is centered on the top of your head in a level position— The straps should be buckled against your chin.
- $\ensuremath{\sqrt{}}$  Make sure bicycle reflectors are secure, the brakes work properly, gears shift smoothly, and tires are tightly secured and properly inflated
- $\sqrt{\phantom{a}}$  Ride on the right side of the road, with traffic, not against.
- $\sqrt{\phantom{a}}$  Use appropriate hand signals and respect traffic signals, stop at all stop signs and lights
- $\sqrt{\phantom{a}}$  If riding at dusk dawn or in the evening, use a light on the bike and make sure your bike has reflectors
- √ Wear clothes and accessories that incorporate retroreflective materials to improve your visibility to motorists

\*Tips provided by Safe Kids USA



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# Important Dog Safety Tips

Dog bites are a very common form of injury, for both adults and children. While it is not possible to know in advance whether a dog will attack there are steps you can take to protect yourself and your children form being bitten.

- $\sqrt{\ }$  Ask the owner's permission before you try to touch or pet the dog.
- $\sqrt{\ }$  Do not suddenly approach a dog, particularly when you are in its territory.
- √ After getting the owner's permission, extend the back of your hand to the dog and allow the dog to sniff you before you try to touch or pet it. (Remember - the back of your hand, not your fingers.)
- $\sqrt{\phantom{a}}$  Do not try to touch a dog that is eating.
- √ Do not touch or pet a dog that is resting or sleeping -- the dog should be aware of your approach. ("Let sleeping dogs lie.")
- $\sqrt{\ }$  Be very careful around a mother dog that has puppies. This is particularly true if the mother is nursing.
- √ Avoid getting the dog very excited, or engaging in excessively rough play.

  The dog's instincts may overpower its self-control.
- $\sqrt{\phantom{a}}$  Do not stare a strange or threatening dog in the eyes.

Tips from SafeUSA



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# Tips for Fire Prevention



In 1999, more than 2,900 people were killed and another 16,425 were injured in home fires in the United States.

- $\sqrt{\phantom{a}}$  Install smoke alarms outside each separate sleeping area and on every floor of your home, including the basement.
- √ Make a family fire escape plan and practice it every 6 months. The plan should indicate two different ways to exit every room and a chosen "safe place" for the family to meet after escaping a fire.
- √ Prevent a fire in your home by never leaving burning candles or lit cigarettes unattended, keeping space heaters at least three feet from anything that can burn, turning space heaters off when you go to sleep, and keeping matches or lighters away from children's reach.
- $\sqrt{\phantom{a}}$  Teach children to stop, drop, and roll in order to smother flames on clothing.

<sup>\*</sup>Tips provided by SafeUSA



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- $\sqrt{}$  Check each set of tree lights for frayed wires, broken bulbs, and loose connections. Turn off lights before you go to bed or leave the house.
- √ Keep holiday plants away from children and pets. Mistletoe, holly berries, and Christmas cactus are poisonous if swallowed.
- √ If you place your child in a shopping cart, always use the safety belt and never let your child stand in or push a shopping cart.
- √ Do not give children under the age of 3 toys that contain small or metal parts or toys that break easily. An easy gauge us using an empty toilet paper roll. If a toy can fit through the roll it is too small for the child.
- √ Include helmets and other protective gear when giving bicycles, skates, or skateboards.



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## **Identity Theft Prevention Tips**



- $\sqrt{\phantom{a}}$  Shred and destroy unwanted documents that contain personal info.
- $\sqrt{\phantom{a}}$  Bring your mail in daily don't leave mail in your mailbox.
- √ Immediately report lost or stolen credit cards.
- √ Review and monitor your consumer credit reports regularly.
- $\sqrt{\phantom{a}}$  Do not carry your social insurance card or your birth certificate.
- $\sqrt{\phantom{0}}$  Keep these tucked away in a safe place.
- $\checkmark$  Be aware when your monthly financial statements arrive in the mail.
- $\sqrt{\phantom{a}}$  Notify your financial institutions when they don't arrive when expected.
- √ Watch your financial statements and ensure all charges made are yours.
- √ Keep your ATM and Debit Card receipts, do not leave these behind.
- √ Shred every piece of mail containing personal and financial information.
- Never reveal your bank account, credit card, mother's maiden name or social insurance number over the phone (unless dealing with a trusted business or organization). Ask the caller to send information by mail.
- √ Keep a list of all your financial accounts such as account numbers, expiration dates, and customer help telephone numbers. Ensure this list is kept in a safe place & use to contact in case of lost or stolen cards.
- √ When creating passwords or PINs, do not use digits of your social insurance number, mother's maiden name, your birthdate, any part of your name (first, middle, last).
- √ Watch your credit card expiration dates, if you don't receive a replacement card contact the issuer.

<sup>\*</sup>Source: www.identity-theft-tips.com



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# Important Winter Safety Tips...

- With its cold and often stormy weather, winter presents many safety challenges-both indoors and out.
- Being prepared and following these simple safety tips can help you stay safe and warm this season\*.
- Install a smoke alarm near bedrooms and on each floor of your home.
- Install a carbon monoxide (CO) alarm near bedrooms and on each floor of your home.
- Keep portable space heaters at least 3 feet from anything that can burn, including bedding, furniture, and clothing.
- Have your fireplace chimney and flue inspected each year and cleaned if needed and burn only untreated wood.
- For long car trips keep food, water, extra blankets, and required medication on hand.

\*Tips provided by SafeUSA



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## Heads Up: Preventing Brain Injuries

There are approximately 1.4 million new occurrences of brain injury annually in the United States. Even with today's technological advancements there is still no cure for brain injury. The best way to protect yourself and your family from brain injuries is to prevent them from occurring.

- E
- Wear a seatbelt every time you drive or ride in a vehicle
- Always buckle your child into a child safety seat, booster seat, or seat belt
- Never drive while under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Wear a helmet when riding a bike, motorcycle, snow vehicle, A.T.V., or when playing sports
- Make sure your child's playground surface is made of shock- absorbing material such as wood, mulch, or sand.
- Keep firearms stored unloaded in a locked cabinet or safe. Store bullets separately.
- Avoid falls in your home by removing tripping hazards such as loose cords or small rugs
- Use safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs when young children are around

<sup>\*</sup>Tips provided by The National Center for Injury Prevention and Control



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## Firework Safety Tips

- √ CHILDREN SHOULD NOT HANDLE FIREWORKS
- √ DO NOT USE ALCOHOL WITH FIREWORKS.
- $\sqrt{\phantom{a}}$  FOLLOW THE LAWS; USE COMMON SENSE
- √ USE FIREWORKS ON A HARD SURFACE.
- √ USE IN A CLEAR, OPEN AREA
- √ KEEP CLEAR OF THE FIREWORKS
- $\checkmark$  USE CARE IN LIGHTING THE FIREWORKS ONE AT A TIME
- √ DON'T USE MALFUNCTIONING OR "DUD" ITEMS
- √ HAVE WATER CLOSE BY
- √ BEWARE OF WINDY CONDITIONS
- √ USE CARE IN HANDLING FIREWORKS
- √ NEVER USE THE FIREWORKS AS WEAPONS
- √ STORE FIREWORKS IN A COOL, DRY PLACE
- √ USE FIREWORKS OUTDOORS
- √ PURCHASE FIREWORKS FROM RELIABLE DEALERS.
- √ WEAR SAFETY GLASSES
- √ BE CAREFUL WITH ANIMALS.
- √ DO NOT TRANSPORT FIREWORKS ON AIRPLANES

Source: http://www.fireworks.com/safety/tips.asp



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# Swimming Pool Safety

No national laws or regulations mandate the safekeeping of children in and around swimming pools. State and local regulations regarding safety equipment, pool design, and water quality do exist, but enforcement is a problem. Below are a few tips as suggested by the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission.

- Do not permit alcohol
- No diving boards unless lifeguards on duty
- Install pool alarms
- Prevent body entrapment/entanglement potential
- Conduct maintenance checks and surveillance before each use
- · Maintain proper chemical mixture
- · Stock first aid equipment
- Provide constant supervision to all children
- Learn CPR and rescue techniques



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## Tips to Lower Your Gas & Electric Bill This Winter

- Install energy –saver showerheads.
- Use compact fluorescent lamps.
- Clean or replace furnace filters regularly.
- Close the damper when the fireplace is not in use.
- Close heating vents in rooms that are not used often.
- Defrost refrigerators and freezers before ice buildup becomes 1/4inch thick.
- Load dishwashers, washing machines and dryers to full capacity before turning them on. Use the shortest cycle that will get your dishes and clothes clean.
- Caulk windows, doors and anywhere air leaks in or out. Weather strip around windows and doors. Wrap hating and cooling ducts with duct wrap, or use mastic sealant. Wrap heater in insulating blanket to minimize heat loss.
- Set the water heater at 140 degrees of "normal" if you have a dishwasher. Otherwise set is at 120 degrees or "low."
- When you have a choice between using the microwave or an electric stove, always use the microwave which can consumer as much as 90 percent less energy.

Source: Santa Cruz Sentinel, 2/2007



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## Halloween Safety Tips

- $\sqrt{}$  Walk, slither, and sneak on sidewalks, not in the street.
- $\sqrt{}$  Cross the street only at corners.
- √ Wear light-colored clothing or reflective-type clothing to be more visible.
- $\sqrt{\ }$  Plan your route and share it with your family. If possible have an adult present at all times.
- $\sqrt{\phantom{0}}$  Carry a flashlight to light your way.
- √ Visit only homes that have the porch light on.
- √ Accept treats at the door and never go into a stranger's house.
- $\checkmark$  Be cautious of animals and strangers.
- $\sqrt{\phantom{a}}$  Keep away from open fires and candles (costumes can be extremely flammable)



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<sup>\*</sup>Safety Tips from the American Red Cross

## **Pollution Prevention Tips**

In honor of Earth Day This April, below are several simple tips to live a "greener" lifestyle.

- Reuse shopping bags or ask that your purchases be placed into as few bags as possible
- Donate unwanted pains, pesticides, furniture, clothes and appliances to friends, neighbors, community groups or charitable organizations
- Stop filling your gas tank after the first "click" to reduce vapors. Do not "topoff" your tank
- Install low-flow showerheads and toilets
- · Turn off lights and appliances when you are not using them
- Pull weeds by hand instead of using a chemical herbicide
- Run errands on your way to or from work or organize them so that you're not driving unnecessary miles
- Hang clothes out to dry instead of using the dryer. If you have to use the dryer, make sure the lint screen is clean before each use
- Repair leaking pipes, hoses and faucetsas soon as possible
- Clean out your trunk! You get 4% less gas mileage for every 100 pounds of extra cargo, and less gas mileage means your car releases more emissions that pollute the environment

\*Source: www.tchd.org



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## Summer Heat Safety & Prevention

## Preventing Heat-Related Illness

- Dress for the heat. Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing. Light colors will reflect away some of the sun's energy. It is also a good idea to wear hats or to use an umbrella.
- Drink water. Carry water or juice with you and drink continuously even if you do not feel thirsty. Avoid alcohol and caffeine, which dehydrate the body.
- Eat small meals and eat more often. Avoid foods that are high in protein which increase metabolic heat.
- · Avoid using salt tablets unless directed to do so by a physician.
- Slow down. Avoid strenuous activity. If you must do strenuous activity, do it during the coolest part of the day, which is usually in the morning between 4:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m.
- Stay indoors when possible.
- Take regular breaks when engaged in physical activity on warm days. Take time out to find a cool place. If you recognize that you, or someone else, is showing the signals of a heat-related illness, stop activity and find a cool place.

## Stages of Heat-Related Illness

- Heat-related illness usually comes in stages. The signal of the
  first stage is heat cramps in muscles. These cramps can be
  very painful. If you are caring for a person who has heat cramps,
  have him or her stop activity and rest. If the person is fully
  awake and alert, have him or her drink small amounts of cool
  water or a commercial sports drink. Gently stretch the cramped
  muscle and hold the stretch for about 20 seconds, then gently
  massage the muscle.
- The signals of the next, more serious stage of a heatrelated illness (often called heat exhaustion) include--
- Cool, moist, pale skin (the skin may be red right after physical activity).
- Headache. Dizziness and weakness or exhaustion.
- Nausea.
- The skin may or may not feel hot.
- The signals of the late stage of a heat-related illness (often called heat stroke) include—
- Vomiting, Decreased alertness level or complete loss of consciousness, high body temperature (sometimes as high as 105°F).
- Skin may still be moist or the victim may stop sweating

and the skin may be red, hot and dry.

· Rapid, weak pulse, rapid, shallow breathing.

Source: American Red Cross



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don't let LOL b the last thing u ever text.



Statistics demonstrate drivers are more likely to cause, or be involved in, a serious or deadly car wreck while texting, than drivers who are drinking while driving.

# So don't text and drive!

And, Parents and Grandparents, urge your children not to text while driving. They don't understand. You may just save the life of your child or grandchild.

I had a friend whose 18 year old granddaughter was killed while texting and driving. He asked that friends spread the word to parents and grandparents to speak to their children and grandchildren about the danger of texting and driving, because they simply do not understand the danger.

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