

# Holiday Safety

## Prevent Holiday Fires

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(NAPS)—Statistics show that the incidence of home fires and electrical accidents typically increases during the winter holiday season. To combat this, the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) is launching its annual holiday safety campaign by providing tips to help consumers prevent household fires and accidents caused by improper cooking, heating, and holiday decorating practices.

“According to the National Fire Protection Association, 860 home fires are caused by holiday decorations, while an additional 210 home fires are caused by Christmas trees per year,” said ESFI President Brett Brenner. “Taking preventative measures when cooking, heating, and decorating can help prevent fires while you enjoy this festive time of year.”

The organization’s website, [holidaysafety.org](http://holidaysafety.org), offers a variety of free-to-share resources that can be shared with your family, your workplace, and throughout your community. Follow these steps to help ensure your safety during the winter holidays:

### Decorating Safety

- Twenty-five percent of holiday fires are caused by electrical decorations. Never leave these on while sleeping or away from home.
- When purchasing a live tree, check for freshness and be sure to water your tree daily until it’s properly disposed of.
- Never leave an open flame, including the fireplace or candles, unattended.
- Keep young children and pets away from holiday lights, electrical decorations, and extension cords to prevent injuries.
- Use electrical decorations and lights only for their labeled purpose, indoor or outdoor. Don’t use indoor decorations outside, as water and electricity should never mix.
- Keep all decorations three feet away from heat sources.
- Carefully inspect decorations before use. Cracked or frayed sockets, loose or bare wires, and loose connections may cause a shock or start a fire.
- Use only electrical decorations and lights that have been approved for safe use by a nationally recognized testing laboratory.
- Avoid plugging too many decorations into a single outlet. Overloaded outlets can overheat and cause fires.
- Ensure cords are not pinched in doors, windows, under heavy furniture, or rugs that could damage the cord and cause a fire.



**Your holiday season can be safe as well as sensational.**

- Always unplug decorations using the gripping area. Pulling on the cord could damage the wire and present a shock or fire hazard.

### Heating Safety

- Replace worn or old heating pads and electric blankets. Look for dark, charred, or frayed spots or cracked or frayed electric cords.
- Do not allow anything on top of a heating pad or electric blanket when it is in use. It may cause the device to overheat.
- Keep anything that can burn at least three feet from heat sources.
- Never leave a space heater unattended. Turn off when leaving a room or sleeping.
- Never plug a space heater into an extension cord or power strip, as this could cause the cords to overheat and cause a fire.
- Never use a cooking stove to heat your home or dry clothes.
- Place space heaters on level, flat surfaces on the ground.
- Have a qualified service professional inspect your heating system annually.
- Install and maintain smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.
- Never use a space heater or appliance with a damaged cord.

### Cooking Safety

- Keep anything that can catch fire away from your stove top.
- Always unplug countertop appliances when not in use.
- Double-check that everything is off when you finish cooking.
- Prevent fires by keeping your oven and stove top clean of grease and dust.
- Never leave the kitchen while cooking.
- Never cook while tired, drinking alcohol, or taking medication that makes you drowsy.
- Never disable a smoke alarm while cooking.
- Children should be closely supervised and kept at least three feet away from all cooking appliances.
- Keep anything that can catch fire away from your stove top.