

Prevent Holiday Fires With Tips From ESFI

Prevent cooking, heating, and decorating-related fires this holiday season.

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Statistics show that the incidents of home fires and electrical accidents typically increase 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."



12 Holiday Safety Tips

ESFI's website, 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:

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Brett Brenner

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.
- When decorating, use new technologies like LED lights, automatic on/off timers, and smart

devices.

- 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 electrical shock and burn 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, including space heaters and fireplaces.
- 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.
- 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 any worn or old heating pad or electric blanket. Look for dark, charred, or frayed spots or one where the electric cord is cracked or frayed.
- 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.

HOME HEATING FIRE PREVENTION TIPS

Heating equipment caused an estimated **56,000 home fires** and caused **470 deaths** between 2009 and 2013.* Learn how to stay safe.

- Keep anything that can burn at least **3 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.
- NEVER** use a cooking stove to heat your home or dry clothes.
- Place heaters on level, flat surfaces **ON THE GROUND**.
- Have a **qualified service professional** inspect your heating system **annually**.
- Install and maintain **carbon monoxide alarms**.
- Never use a space heater or any appliance with a **damaged cord**.

*According to the National Fire Protection Association

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Fire Prevention and Safety Grants: Funding provided through DHS/FEMA's Grant Program Directorate Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program

Home Heating Fire Prevention

HOME COOKING FIRE PREVENTION TIPS

Cooking is the leading cause of **home fires** and fire injuries. **Ranges or cooktops** cause **62%** of home fires.* Learn how to stay safe.

- Keep anything that can catch fire away from your **stovetop**.
- ALWAYS** unplug countertop appliances when not in use.
- Make sure you have, and test, **GFCI receptacles** in your kitchen to prevent shock and electrocution.
- Double check that **everything is off** when you finish.
- Prevent fires by keeping your oven and stove top **clean of grease and dust**.
- NEVER** leave the kitchen while cooking.
- NEVER** cook while sleepy, drinking alcohol, or taking medication that makes you drowsy.
- NEVER** disable a smoke alarm while cooking.
- NEVER** use a cooking stove to heat your home.

*According to the National Fire Protection Association

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Home Cooking Fire Prevention

- Place space heaters on level, flat surfaces on the ground. Never place heaters on top of furniture.
- Have a qualified service professional inspect your heating system annually.
- Install and maintain smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. Alarms should be tested monthly, and batteries should be changed yearly.
- Never use a space heater or appliance with a damaged cord.
- Never use a cooking stove to heat your home or dry your clothes.

Cooking Safety

- Keep anything that can catch fire away from your stovetop.
- 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 stovetop clean of grease and dust. Also, clean the exhaust hood and duct over the stove and vacuum refrigerator coils regularly.
- 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 stovetop.
- Ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) should be installed where electricity and water may come in contact to prevent shock and electrocution.

ABOUT ESFI

ESFI is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to promoting electrical safety at home and the workplace. For more information and to use ESFI's free resources throughout your community, visit esfi.org.

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