

# Holiday Fire Safety

When a member of your community is killed in a home fire, it is important to let others know how they can prevent a similar tragedy. As you continue to report on the fire, the U.S. Fire Administration encourages you to remind your audience that many fire deaths and injuries are preventable.

More than 4,000 Americans die each year in fires and more than 20,000 are injured. Many of them might be alive today if they had only had the information they needed to avoid a disaster. The following life-saving tips could make a big difference to your audience. By incorporating them in your story now, while the moment is still fresh, you could help save a life.

## Did you know?

- Eighty-two percent of all fire deaths occur in the home.
- There are an estimated 200 fires and 25 injuries resulting from Christmas tree fires each year.
- Most holiday fires can be easily prevented.
- Having a working smoke alarm reduces one's chance of dying in a fire by nearly a half.

Following these simple fire safety tips can boost survival rates dramatically. Please share them with your readers because knowledge is the best fire protection.

## Holiday Fire Safety Life-Saving Tips

- Install a smoke alarm on every level of your home. Test smoke alarm batteries every month and change them at least once a year. Consider installing a 10-year lithium battery-powered smoke alarm, which is sealed so it cannot be tampered with or opened.
- Do not place your tree close to a heat source, including fireplace or heat vent. The heat will dry out the tree and cause it to more easily ignited by heat, flame or sparks.
- Never put Christmas tree branches or needles in a fireplace or woodburning stove.
- When the tree becomes dry, discard it promptly. The best way to dispose of your tree is to take it to a recycling center or have it collected by a community pick-up service.
- Inspect holiday lights each year for frayed wire, bare spots, gaps in the insulation, broken or cracked sockets, and excessive kinking or wear.
- Only use UL-listed lighting.
- Do not overload outlets. Connect strings of lights to an extension cord before plugging the cord into the outlet.
- Do not leave lit holiday lights unattended.
- Avoid using lit candles. If you do use them, make sure they are in stable holders and place them where they can not be easily knocked over.
- Never leave the house with candles burning.

For more information on the U.S. Fire Administration's Public Education Campaigns or to speak with a USFA spokesperson, please call 202-842-3600. Also visit <http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/> or <http://www.firesafety.gov/> for additional information on fire safety.