



# World Safety Organization December Safety Brief

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## Holiday Safety Tips: The 12 Days of Safety

MSA Safety at [blog.msasafety.com](http://blog.msasafety.com)

*The holidays are a joyful time to spend with family and friends, but a careless mistake could put a real damper on your festivities. Here are 12 safety tips to keep in mind this holiday season.*

### **Never leave a burning candle unattended**

On the first day of safety, we remind you to extinguish any lit candles when you leave the room, your house, or go to sleep. According to an NFPA study, candles start more than half of all home decoration structure fires, and most of those fires occur in December.

### **Turn off tree lights, decorations, and portable space heaters when away or asleep.**

Did you know that local fire departments respond to more than 50,000 fires involving heating equipment and more than 700 caused by decorations each year? Be sure to unplug all of your lights, decorations, and portable space heaters when not in the same room.

### **Never throw wrapping paper in the fire**

On the third day of safety, remember to never toss wrapping paper into the fireplace. Doing so could result in a flash fire because wrapping paper can ignite suddenly and burn intensely.

### **Only use outdoor and indoor lights as indicated on their packaging**

On the fourth day of safety, we remind you to only use lights tested for safety by a nationally recognized testing laboratory. Lights for both indoor and outdoor usage must meet different standards that testing laboratories can verify. Before using, be sure to check each set of lights – whether new or old – for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections. Throw out damaged sets and do not use electric lights on a metallic tree. Check outdoor lights for labels showing the lights have been certified for outdoor use, and only plug them into a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI)-protected receptacle or a portable GFCI.

### **Don't overload circuits, extension cords, or electrical sockets**

Overloading circuits, extension cords, or electrical sockets could cause a fire. Use no more than three standard-size sets of lights per single extension cord.

### **Never leave cooking or baking unattended**

Most people don't realize that cooking fires are the number one cause of home fires and that, as reported by the NFPA, unattended cooking equipment is a factor in one-third of reported home cooking fires and half of the associated deaths. Be especially careful when you're using the stove or cooktop and while frying foods. Always stay in the kitchen—even if you're baking or roasting—and set a timer to remind yourself to check on cooking food.

### **Keep holiday plants away from pets**

On the seventh day of safety, we remind you to keep festive holiday plants including poinsettias, mistletoe and holly out of pets' reach. Ingesting any of these may cause a range of symptoms, while usually mild, ranging from stomach upset to low blood pressure.

## **Check your smoke detector battery**

On the eighth day of safety, we remind you that smoke detectors should be tested regularly, and the batteries replaced at least once or twice a year. Mark your calendar to check your alarm during the holidays. A working smoke alarm cuts your risk of home fire death in half.

## **Celebrate small and don't drink and drive**

This year, planning a virtual holiday celebration or celebrating only with members of your own household poses the lowest risk of spreading COVID-19. If you do plan an in-person celebration, remember to wear a mask, maintain a distance of 6 feet, and wash hands frequently. If you do plan a small gathering, there are other safety concerns to keep in mind – including that every year hundreds of people die in drunk driving accidents during the holiday season. If you plan to drink alcohol, make sure you have a designated driver to get you and your loved ones home safe and sound. Or consider using rideshare app.

## **Choose a fire-resistant artificial tree and be sure to water a natural tree daily**

On average, more than 200 house fires are caused by Christmas trees each year. To prevent this from happening to you, we remind you on the tenth day of safety to exercise caution when placing, decorating, and maintaining either kind of tree. Position your tree at least three feet away from a heat source and remember to keep natural trees hydrated.

## **Maintain woodburning fireplaces and chimneys**

Nothing is cozier than relaxing by the fire, but it's especially important to have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year by a qualified professional. Also, keep anything that can burn at least three-feet away from the fireplace, and maintain a three-foot "kid-free zone" around open fires and space heaters.

## **Travel safely and don't overshare on social media**

Social media is a great way to share what you and your family are doing for the holidays. However, if you are leaving your home for an extended period of time, we remind you on the twelfth day of safety not to put your plans or pictures on social media until after you return. You could be unintentionally inviting thieves to break into your house while you're away. Also, keep in mind any federal and local guidelines for COVID-19 when making holiday travel arrangements this year.



## WSO-WMC Holiday Hours

12/23 : Close at Noon

12/26: Closed

12/30: Close at Noon

01/02: Closed



*The WSO World Management Center  
wishes everyone a safe and happy Holiday Season*

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