

# SAFETY NEWSLETTER

FORT GORDON  
GARRISON SAFETY OFFICE



Winter 2025



## Topics For Winter Safety

- Decorating Safety
- In the Right Light
- It's Best to Gift Safely
- Candle and Fireplace Safety
- 'Tis the Season for Safe Eatings
- Seasons Heating
- Winter Car Care
- Furry Friends Safety Tips

## Deck the Halls

Decorating is one of the best ways to get into a holiday mood, but emergency departments see thousands of injuries involving holiday decorating every season. Keep safe by following these tips:

- Keep poisonous plants - mistletoe, holly berries, Jerusalem cherry, amaryllis, and poinsettias away from children and pets
- Use only "Fire Resistant" artificial trees
- Use ladders on flat, dry surfaces and maintain three points of contact when ascending or descending
- Ensure decorations don't block doorways
- Avoid placing breakable ornaments or ones with small parts on the lower tree branches where small children and pets can reach them



For more decorating safety and fire prevention tips check out the infographic from [ESFI.org](http://ESFI.org) on the next page.

# IN THE RIGHT *light*

## DECORATE YOUR HOME SAFELY DURING THE HOLIDAYS:

According to the **National Fire Protection Association**, **860 home fires** caused by holiday decorations occur **each year**. An additional **210 home fires** are caused by Christmas trees per year. Follow these steps to ensure you decorate your home safely during the winter holidays.



Make sure all **extension cords and electrical decorations** are marked for **proper use**



**Outdoor electric lights and decorations** should be plugged into circuits protected by **ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs)**



**Inspect** all lights, decorations, and extension cords for **damage before using**



**Exercise caution** when decorating near power lines. Keep yourself and your equipment at least **10 feet from power lines**



**Turn off** all indoor and outdoor electrical decorations **before leaving home or going to sleep**



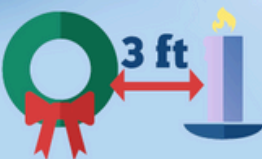
**Avoid overloading electrical outlets** with too many decorations or electrical devices. They can **overheat and cause a fire**



**Never** connect more than **three strings of incandescent lights** together



**Water** your Christmas tree **daily**



Keep all decorations at least **3 feet away from heating equipment or an open flame**



**Purchase electrical decorations from reputable retailers** and that are approved by a national recognized testing lab such as **UL** (Underwriters Laboratories), Intertek (**ETL**), or Canadian Standards Association (**CSA**)

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON ELECTRICAL FIRE PREVENTION VISIT [WWW.ESFI.ORG](http://WWW.ESFI.ORG)

**PLEASE SHARE THIS FREE RESOURCE TO SAVE LIVES**



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## It's Best to Give Safely

Prevent child gift injuries by:

- Follow age guidance when buying
- Once gifts are opened, discard plastic wrappings or other packaging
- Charging toys should be supervised by adults
- When giving scooters or riding toys, give the gift of safety gear and ensure helmets are worn
- Read all warnings and instructions
- Avoid toys with small magnets for children under the age of six

Gifts and toys should bring joy, not cause preventable injuries. Thousands of children are seriously injured in toy-related incidents every year. Avoid safety hazards while gifting with these tips from the U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. Visit CPSC to find out more on holiday toy safety recalls at [www.cpsc.gov/Recalls](http://www.cpsc.gov/Recalls)



## Candle and Fireplace Safety

Use of candles and fireplaces, combined with an increase in the amount of combustible, seasonal decorations in many homes during the holidays, means more risk of fire. The National Fire Protection Association reports on average candles cause 46% of fires in December. Ensure candles are placed where they cannot be accessed by children or knocked over. Keep lighters and matches away from children. Don't burn trees, wreaths, or wrapping paper in a fireplace. Use a screen on a fireplace when a fire is burning. Never leave candles or fires burning unattended or when you are sleeping. Inspect and clean the chimney and fireplace annually.

## Turkey Fryer Safety

Be alert to the dangers if you are celebrating the holiday by frying a turkey. Every year there are reports of hundreds of turkey fryer related fires, burns, or other injuries, as well as property loss from these incidents. If you are going fry a turkey, make sure you are at least 10 ft from your home, never fry a frozen turkey, don't overfill your cooking pot with oil, use fryers on level surfaces, don't overheat the oil, and keep pets and children away from the area.

## Traveling for the Holidays? Be prepared.

1. Prepare your car for winter and keep an emergency kit with you.
2. Get a good night's sleep before departing and avoid drowsy driving.
3. Leave early, planning ahead for traffic.
4. Make sure every person in the vehicle is properly buckled up no matter how long or short the distance traveled.
5. Put your cell phone away! Many distractions occur while driving, but cell phones are the main culprit.
6. Practice defensive driving.
7. Designate a sober driver to ensure guests make it home safely after a holiday party. Alcohol or over the counter, prescription and illegal drugs can cause impairment.
8. Monitor weather for any incoming storms or icy conditions and plan your travel around those conditions.



## Tis the Season for Food

Remember food safety is the most important ingredient when preparing holiday foods. Keep these tips in mind as you cook this holiday season:

- Wash your hands frequently when handling food
- Keep raw meat away from other foods
- Use separate cutting boards, plates and utensils for uncooked and cooked meats to avoid cross-contamination
- Use a food thermometer to make sure meat is cooked to a safe temperature
- Refrigerate hot or cold leftover food within two hours of being served
- When storing turkey, cut the leftovers in small pieces so they will chill quickly
- Leftovers are safe for three to four days when properly refrigerated

## Seasons Heatings

As temperatures drop in winter, many people start using their heaters, fireplaces, and other fuel-burning appliances. These can produce carbon monoxide (CO), a colorless, odorless gas that can be deadly if undetected. Having working carbon monoxide detectors is essential to alert you to dangerous levels and keep your family safe. Check your detectors regularly and replace batteries to be ready for the season.

## Winter Car Care

Getting your car ready for winter is a great start to your holiday season. In addition to your regular maintenance, check for these things:

- Test your battery, power can drop in the cold
- Check tire tread and wipers and replace if necessary
- Keep dirt from sensors to allow assistive-driving features to work
- Never leave a vehicle running in your garage to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning

## Cold Weather Tips

5 tips to protect pets in colder temperatures

### keep pets inside

Leaving pets outside can result in them freezing, becoming lost, or injured. If pets cannot come indoors, provide a draft-free enclosure with raised flooring.



### provide outerwear

Exposed ears, noses, and paws can lead to frostbite. Provide sweaters and paw protection for outdoor walks.

### check for poisons

As temperatures drop, the use of anti-freeze rises. Wipe up spills and keep antifreeze out of reach of your pets.



### watch for vehicles & wildlife

Vehicle engines provide heat for outdoor animals. Check under the hood and protect pets from wildlife seeking shelter in the cold.



### prepare for power outages

Have extra food, water, and medicines ready in case of an emergency



## Furry Friend Safety

Keeping pets safe in the winter means being mindful of how cold weather affects their health and comfort. Limit their time outdoors and provide a warm, dry place for them to rest. Make sure they have access to unfrozen water and keep an eye on their paws for signs of irritation. Dressing pets up can be fun and add extra protection. With a little preparation and attention, you can help ensure your pets stay healthy, warm and safe all season.

