

# Holiday Season

**Have a safe and joyful holiday season! Follow these safety tips.**

## Home Safety

- Be extra cautious about locking doors and windows when you leave the house, even if you will only be gone for a minute.
- Don't put large displays of holiday gifts in view of your windows or doors.
- When going on trips or out for evenings, use automatic timers to turn indoor lights on and off to make it appear you are home.
- Immediately after the holidays, mark new gifts with your California Driver's License or ID number.
- Don't advertise what you got for Christmas by putting the boxes out on trash day. Break the boxes down so they fit in your recycle container.
- The CSUCI Police Department can provide vacation security checks for residents of University Glen. Contact Police dispatch at (805) 437-8444 for more information.

## A Season for Sharing in Fire Safety

Each year fires occurring during the holiday season claim the lives of over 400 people, injure 1,650 more, and cause over \$990 million in damage. According to the United States Fire Administration (USFA), there are simple life-saving steps you can take to ensure a safe and happy holiday. By following some of the outlined precautionary tips, individuals can greatly reduce their chances of becoming a holiday fire casualty.

### Preventing Christmas Tree Fires

Special fire safety precautions need to be taken when keeping a live tree in the house. A burning tree can rapidly fill a room with fire and deadly gases.

### Selecting a Tree for the Holiday

Needles on fresh trees should be green and hard to pull back from the branches, and the needle should not break if the tree has been freshly cut. The trunk should be sticky to the touch. Old trees can be identified by bouncing the tree trunk on the ground. If many needles fall off, the tree has been cut too long, has probably dried out, and is a fire hazard.

### Caring for Your Tree

Do not place your tree close to a heat source, including a fireplace or heat vent. The heat will dry out the tree, causing it to be more easily ignited by heat, flame or sparks. Be careful not to drop or flick cigarette ashes near a tree. Do not put your live tree up too early or leave it up for longer than two weeks. Keep the tree stand filled with water at all times.

## **Disposing of Your Tree**

Never put 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 by taking it to a recycling center or having it hauled away by a community pick-up service

## **Holiday Lights**

- Maintain Your Holiday Lights
- Inspect holiday lights each year for frayed wires, bare spots, gaps in the insulation, broken or cracked sockets, and excessive kinking or wear before putting them up. Use only lighting listed by an approved testing laboratory.
- Do Not Overload Electrical Outlets
- Do not link more than three light strands, unless the directions indicate it is safe. Connect strings of lights to an extension cord before plugging the cord into the outlet.
- Make sure to periodically check the wires - they should not be warm to the touch.
- Do Not Leave Holiday Lights on Unattended

## **Holiday Decorations**

- Use Only Nonflammable Decorations
- All decorations should be nonflammable or flame-retardant and placed away from heat vents.
- Never Put Wrapping Paper in a Fireplace It can result in a very large fire, throwing off dangerous sparks and embers and may result in a chimney fire.

## **Artificial Christmas Trees**

- If you are using a metallic or artificial tree, make sure it is flame retardant.

## **Candle Care**

- Avoid Using Lit Candles
- If you do use them, make sure they are in stable holders and place them where they cannot be easily knocked down. Never leave the house with candles burning.
- Never Put Lit Candles on a Tree
- Do not go near a Christmas tree with an open flame - candles, lighters or matches.

**Finally, as in every season, have working smoke alarms installed on every level of your home, test them monthly and keep them clean and equipped with fresh batteries at all times. Know when and how to call for help. And remember to practice your home escape plan.**

## **Holiday Shopping and Driving Safety Tips**

- Always park in a spot where there is plenty of light and if possible, park close to your destination.
- Avoid parking next to vans, trucks with camper shells, or cars with tinted windows.
- Close all windows and lock all doors.
- Take note of where you parked your car and what store entrance it is closest to.
- Shop with a friend or family member - having a friend walk to and from the parking lot with you will help keep you both safe and sound.
- Place your packages in your trunk or under your seat where no one can see them.
- Condense your packages into one or two bags to create the illusion that you did not purchase so many valuable (and theft-worthy) items.
- If you run out to your car to drop off packages while shopping, make sure to move your car to a new location before heading back into the mall. This will help lead anyone that is watching you to believe that you and your packages have headed home for the night.
- Leave your most expensive purchases until the end of the day when you can quickly hop in your car and go directly home.
- Request for a security guard to escort to your car.
- When walking to your car have your head up and your keys ready, the last thing you want to do is appear vulnerable to criminals. In addition, make sure to look under and in front of your car to make sure that no one is waiting to attack you.
- Do not approach your car alone if there are suspicious people in the area.
- Be aware of your surroundings. Often thieves will disguise themselves as normal shoppers who accidentally bump into you stealing your purse, wallet, packages, car keys or even worse, attacking you.
- When entering your car, make sure to check your front seat and back seat for anyone that could potentially be hiding in the car.
- Get into the car, lock the doors and exit the area immediately. Criminals prey on shoppers who sit in their cars to make phone calls or review their purchases for the day. Don't leave yourself susceptible to such a risk.

Links to additional web sites with more holiday safety tips.

[U.S Fire Administration](#)  
[American Red Cross](#)

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