

12 DAYS OF HOLIDAY FIRE & CO SAFETY

12 TIPS OF HOLIDAY FIRE & CO SAFETY

- 1 Water fresh trees daily.** Keep the base of the trunk in water at all times. Keep your tree away from any ignition source such as the fireplace, heaters or candles.
- 2 Check all lights before decorating.** Before you put up lights, check the cords closely. Discard any sets that are frayed or damaged. Never plug more than 3 strings of lights together. Never connect LED to conventional lights. This is likely to wear out LED bulbs more rapidly and could pose a fire or electrical hazard.
- 3 Make sure smoke alarms work, replace any over 10 years old.** It's the law to have working smoke alarms on every storey of your home and outside all sleeping areas. Test alarms monthly and replace batteries once per year, or, choose "Worry-Free" models with 10-year sealed batteries that never need to be changed. Check the age of your smoke alarms - replace every 10 years.
- 4 Protect your family with carbon monoxide alarms; it's the law in Ontario.** If your home has an attached garage, wood or gas fireplace, or other fuel-burning device, you must have a working CO alarm outside every sleeping area. For optimal protection, install one on every storey. Like smoke alarms, CO alarms wear out. Check the age of your CO alarms and replace according to manufacturer's instructions.
- 5 Make sure everyone knows how to get out safely.** Develop and practise a home fire escape plan with everyone in your family, as well as your guests over the holidays. Once outside, stay outside and call 911 from a cell phone or neighbour's house. Determine who will be responsible for helping anyone who may need assistance.
- 6 Use extension cords wisely.** Avoid overloading circuits with plugs and extension cords, as this can create overheating that could result in fire. Never put cords under rugs.
- 7 Give space heaters space.** Keep them at least one metre (3 feet) away from anything that can burn such as curtains, upholstery, or holiday decorations.
- 8 Go flameless.** Avoid using real candles, opting instead for safer flameless candles. If you use real candles, remember to blow them out before leaving the room or going to bed. Keep lit candles safely away from children and pets and anything that can burn.
- 9 Keep matches and lighters out of the sight and reach of children.** Matches and lighters can be deadly in the hands of children. If you smoke, have only one lighter or book of matches and keep it with you at all times.
- 10 Watch what you heat.** Always stay in the kitchen and pay attention to your cooking - especially if using oil or high temperatures. If a pot catches fire, carefully slide a tight-fitting lid over the pot to smother the flames and then turn off the heat.
- 11 Encourage smokers to smoke outside.** Careless smoking is the leading cause of fatal fires. Encourage smokers to smoke outside and use large, deep ashtrays that can't be knocked over. Make sure cigarette butts are properly extinguished.
- 12 There's more to responsible drinking than taking a cab home.** With all the festive cheer this time of year, keep a close eye on anyone attempting to cook or smoke while under the influence of alcohol. Alcohol is often a common factor in many fatal fires.

