

Fire and Life Safety Bulletin

December 2009



Keep The Wreath Green !



Residents are asked to help “Keep the Wreath Green” throughout this holiday season. This program, which emphasizes fire safety, provides a visual reminder of the community’s success in preventing fires. Each Richmond Fire Station has a wreath placed on the front of the fire station. The wreath is illuminated with green light bulbs. If there are **NO** significant structure fires during the holiday season, the wreath will remain lit with only green bulbs. If a significant structure fire occurs during this holiday season in that fire district, one of the green bulbs will be replaced with a red bulb. By simply looking at the wreath, everyone will know how successful the community has been at being fire-safe. Here are some helpful reminders for you to “Keep The Wreath Green”.

√.....A fresh cut tree will stay green longer and be less of a fire hazard than a dry one. To check for freshness feel the needles; they shouldn’t come off in your hand. A fresh tree is deep green in color and has a strong scent of pine. After you get the tree home, cut a half-inch off the trunk and keep plenty of water in the stand throughout the holidays. Place your Christmas tree in a location away from the fireplace, radiators and other heat sources. Be sure that it is out of the traffic pattern and primary evacuation route in case of an emergency.

√.....Use only lights that have been tested for safety. These can be identified by the attached label from a listing agency such as UL. Check the labels on lights to be used outdoors to see that they are suitable for outdoor use. Never use indoor lights outside. Read the manufacturer’s instructions carefully. Inspect new and previously used light strings. Replace damaged items before plugging lights in. Always turn off lights when you retire for the evening or leave your home.

√.....Choose only holiday decorations made with flame-resistant, flame-retardant or non-combustible materials.



Tips for Holiday Entertaining:

1. Unattended cooking is the leading cause of home fires in the United States. When cooking for holiday visitors, remember to keep an eye on the range.
2. Provide plenty of large, deep ashtrays and check them frequently. Cigarette butts can smolder in the trash and cause a fire, so completely douse cigarette butts with water before discarding, or flush them down the toilet.
3. After a party, always check on, between, and under upholstery or inside trash cans for cigarette butts that may be smoldering.
4. Keep matches and lighters up high, out of sight and reach of children (preferably in a locked cabinet). When smokers visit your home, ask them to keep their smoking materials with them so young children do not touch them.

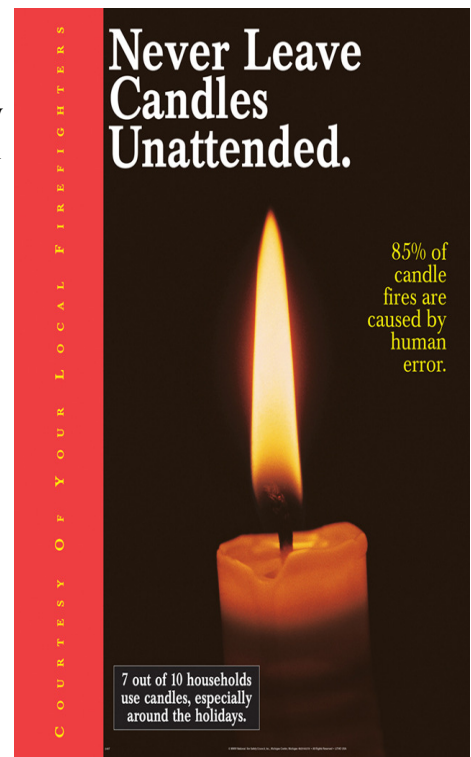
Candle Fires Are Becoming A Problem

An estimated 15,600 home structure fires are started by candles. These fires result in over 150 civilian deaths and 1,270 civilian injuries. Direct property loss is estimated at \$539 million dollars. Unfortunately, there seems to be an upward trend in fires started by candles. Here are more facts:

- * On average, one home candle fire is reported every 34 minutes.
- * 20% of the fires originated from candles that were unattended.
- * December is the peak time of the year for home candle fires.

So what can you do to prevent becoming a statistic?

- Never leave burning candles unattended.
- Always trim wicks to 1/4 inch before burning.
- Candles should be in sturdy metal, ceramic or glass holders and should be placed where they can't be knocked over by children or pets.
- Never place lit candles near things that can burn. This includes decorations, curtains, books and paper.
- When jar candles reach within one inch of the bottom, throw them out. The glass can shatter from the heat and hot wax.
- Do not allow children to "help" light candles.



Great Holiday Gift Ideas

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Smoke Alarms | <input type="checkbox"/> Weather Radio |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carbon Monoxide Detector | <input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Home Escape Ladder | |

Parents Need to Stay One Step Ahead of Children

New research by the Home Safety Council reveals that the vast majority of parents (83 %) admit that they have left their toddler unsupervised in the home for a few moments or even longer. Their survey polled parents of children between the ages of 2 and 4 finding that while almost all had taken some steps to childproof their home, very few have successfully kept their toddlers from getting into dangerous situations. The survey shows that nearly three-quarters of toddlers have climbed on furniture, and more than half have been caught climbing out of the crib. At first signs of sitting and pulling up, parents need to take a second look at the safety of their home. Baby proofing is a good start but toddler-proofing is just as critical.

Surviving a Hotel Fire!

While no one can anticipate a fire, being prepared and knowing what to do can greatly increase your chance of survival. Many of you will be traveling over the holidays. Please keep these safety tips in mind:

- When making reservations, ensure the hotel has smoke detectors and automatic fire sprinklers.
- Once you check-in, locate at least two exits from your floor...never use the elevator during a fire.
- Count the number of doors between your room and each exit in case you make a smoky escape.
- Note the location of fire alarms, fire extinguishers and other emergency equipment.
- Always place your room key and cell phone so you will know where they are in an emergency.
- Decide who will be responsible for infants, toddlers and the elderly.

Protect your loved ones from fire and burns. Share this information with friends and family.

Spread Holiday Cheer! - If you know someone that needs a smoke alarm installed or a battery replaced give the Richmond Metro Fire Safety Hotline a call at 1-888-537-5967. Let's give them and us the peace of mind that they are protected with an early warning device in case of fire. **Safety is what you make it.**