



**STRONGSVILLE FIRE and EMERGENCY
SERVICES DEPARTMENT
PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT**



Holiday Safety Tips

Each year during the holiday season, fires injure 2,000 people in the U.S. and cause over \$500 million dollars in damage. By following these holiday safety tips, you can help keep your family and home firesafe this holiday season:

Candles:

Candles are beautiful, popular, and dangerous. Do not leave burning candles unattended, or place them near flammable materials. Make sure they are in a secure place where children and pets won't knock them over. Put candles in a non-tip candleholder before you light them. Make sure all candles are extinguished before you leave the home or office, and before going to bed. The most common area of origin for candle fires is the bedroom, then living rooms, bathrooms and the kitchen.

Lights:

Make sure that all indoor and outdoor holiday lights bear the mark of an independent testing laboratory. Throw away any set with cracked lights, frayed cords, or loose or damaged sockets. Don't overload electrical outlets or run extension cords under carpets, across doorways, or near heaters. Be sure extension cords aren't pinched behind or under furniture, and unplug all decorative lights before leaving your home or going to bed. Never run extension cords across lawns, driveways, or traffic areas. Power for all outdoor lighting should be supplied by permanent weatherproof wiring installed by a professional electrician.

Kitchen:

During the holidays much time is spent cooking, so it's critical to take precautions in the kitchen. Be sure to keep pot handles and electrical appliance cords out of the reach of children. Put a lid on a pot or pan to extinguish a food or grease fire, and in the event of an oven fire, turn off the heat and close the oven door.

Fireplaces:

Before using your fireplace, have your chimney inspected by a professional for proper installation, cracks, blockages (bird nests), leaks, or creosote buildup. Creosote is a chemical substance that forms when wood burns, accumulates in chimneys and can cause a chimney fire if not removed. Be sure to open the flue for adequate ventilation when using the fireplace. Always use a fire screen, and burn only material appropriate for fireplaces. Never burn trash or paper in a fireplace. Burning paper can float up your chimney and onto your roof or onto your neighbors' roof and can cause a fire. Remove ashes from the fireplace in a metal container and store them somewhere outside your home.

Be Prepared!

Test all smoke detectors in the house to make sure that they are in proper working order, and be sure to install fresh batteries every six months. Be sure that all family members know how to call the fire department, and make an escape plan so that everyone knows what to do in the event of an emergency.