



Department
of Commerce

NEWS RELEASE

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WHAT CAN YOU DO? STATE FIRE MARSHAL, LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OFFER TIPS TO SAFELY CELEBRATE UPCOMING HOLIDAY SEASON

Proper Precautions Make a Safe, Festive Family Holiday

State Fire Marshal Larry L. Flowers and Lieutenant Governor Mary Taylor are reminding Ohioans to stay fire safe ahead of the holiday season. Many of us will be cooking and decorating for the holidays, and that could increase the likelihood of a fire in your home.

"The holidays are a time for celebration, but Ohioans still need to be diligent when it comes to fire safety," Marshal Flowers said. "When cooking and decorating, simple steps can help you eliminate fire risks in your home and ensure your holiday is an enjoyable one."

Also important is ensuring adequate financial protection in the event property is damaged and injury occurs. As part of her Think Again initiative, Taylor is asking Ohioans to be insurance ready heading into the holidays.

"Contact your agent and conduct an insurance review to avoid any future coverage surprises," said Taylor, also director of the Ohio Department of Insurance. "Discuss if you have adequate insurance for the different risks the holiday season presents."

Marshal Flowers and Taylor offer the following tips:

Cooking Safety

- Have a safety zone: keep children and pets three feet away from the stove and oven.
- Avoid wearing loose clothing or dangling sleeves while cooking.
- Keep potholders, oven mitts, towels and anything flammable away from your stovetop.
- Clean food and grease from burners and the stove top.
- If you use a turkey fryer, keep it outside, away from buildings and other structures, such as garages, carports and decks. Never leave the turkey fryer unattended. The turkey should be thawed prior to frying. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- If you are cooking and a fire starts, turn off the heat source, put a lid on it, and get out of your home!

Decoration Safety

- Purchase lights that bear the label of a nationally recognized testing laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL).
- Inspect lights each year, and throw them away if they have frayed or pinched wires.
- Outdoor lights are specifically labeled for outdoor use. They should be fastened securely and placed on a ground fault interrupter circuit.
- Do not connect too many light sets together and never use extension cords that are worn or cracked. Do not run them under rugs or over sharp objects.

- Turn off lights and blow out candles when you go to bed or leave the house.
- Live Christmas trees should be as fresh as possible. Make a fresh cut at the base of the trunk, and place the tree in a sturdy stand; water it daily. When the tree becomes dry, discard it promptly.
- Locate the tree as far away from heat sources as possible. Never place lighted candles on or near the tree, or where the tree may fall if knocked over by a pet or child.
- Dispose of your tree shortly after Christmas or when it becomes dry.
- Do not block your primary or alternate escape routes with a tree, decorations or presents.
- Consider using battery-operated flameless candles, which can look, smell and feel like real candles.
- If you do use lit candles, make sure they are in stable holders and place them where they cannot be knocked down easily.

For more tips of fire safety, visit the State Fire Marshal's [website](#).

Insurance Preparation

- Have the appropriate amount of coverage suitable for your property and possessions.
- Decide how your policy will pay for personal property damage: actual cash value (current replacement cost minus depreciation) or replacement cost coverage (comparably new).
- Guaranteed replacement cost policies can protect you from being underinsured.
- Prepare a home inventory using tools available at www.insurance.ohio.gov. It will prove valuable in the claim filing process.
- Smoke detectors and fire extinguishers can impact your premium.

In addition, Marshal Flowers encourages Ohioans to have a working smoke alarm installed on every level of the home and inside and outside of each bedroom or sleeping area. Smoke alarms with a manufacture date of 2006 or earlier need to be replaced. If there is a fire hydrant near your home, keep it clear of snow, ice and debris for easy access by the fire department. Each member of the household should know two ways out of your home and practice those fire escape plans twice a year. Guests should be aware of the escape plan and the location of any fire extinguishers in case there is an emergency.

Ohioans with insurance questions can call the Ohio Department of Insurance at 800-686-1526 and visit www.insurance.ohio.gov for information.

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