



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY

John J. Barthelmes, Commissioner

Division of Fire Safety
OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL
J. William Degnan, State Fire Marshal

Office: 110 Smokey Bear Blvd., Concord, NH
Mailing Address: 33 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH 03305
603-223-4289, FAX 603-223-4294



PRESS RELEASE

November 9, 2010

Be Fire Safe during the Holiday Season

New Hampshire State Fire Marshal J. William Degnan, urges everyone to be safety conscious throughout the holiday season. With Thanksgiving just around the corner, the increased cooking activity, the use of holiday lighting, candles and other decorations pose an even greater potential for fires and fire deaths. In a recent report released by the US Fire Administration, the average number of reported residential building fires on Thanksgiving Day almost doubled (49 percent) from the average number of fires in residential buildings on all days other than Thanksgiving (26 percent). As of October 31, seventeen people have already died in New Hampshire fires.

The New Hampshire State Fire Marshal's Office joins the National Association of State Fire Marshals in suggesting the following safety tips to ensure a safe and happy holiday season:

COOKING SAFETY

Pay particular attention while cooking, especially when using oils and grease. Cooking appliances should be kept clean of grease build-up, which can easily ignite. Applying a lid to a small grease fire is usually the most effective and safest method of controlling it. Trying to carry a pan that's on fire is extremely dangerous because it can ignite clothes or spill, causing severe burns. If the fire is inside your oven, turn off the heat and leave the door closed to cut off the fire's air supply. Young children should be kept away from cooking appliances to prevent any mishaps. It's always a good idea to use back burners when possible and keep pot handles turned to the inside so they won't be pulled or knocked over. Check stoves and other appliances before going to bed or leaving your home to make sure that the units are left in the "off" position. With the increased popularity of frying turkey, NFPA and the National Burn Foundation warn consumers and discourage the use of turkey fryers. Tests have shown that many of the fryers have a risk of tipping over, overheating, or spilling hot oil, leading to fires and burns. The suggested alternative is to have a commercial professional prepare the turkey.

HOLIDAY LIGHTS

Inspect holiday lights each year for frayed wires, bare spots, gaps in the insulation, broken or cracked sockets. To avoid overloading electrical outlets, do not link more than three light strands unless the directions indicate it is safe. However tempting, it is not recommended to leave your lights burning overnight or while you are away from home.

CANDLE SAFETY

If you choose to use lit candles, make sure they are in stable holders and place them where they cannot be easily knocked down. Never leave lit candles unattended. Lit candles should not be placed on or near your Christmas tree or near anything that can burn. Young children can be fascinated with a burning flame, so be sure candles are not in reach of curious hands.

Now is a great time to make sure your smoke alarms are in working order and to review your home escape plan so that if in the event of a fire, everyone in your household knows how to get out quickly and safely. For even greater protection, consider installing a residential fire sprinkler system, which actually stops the spread of fire, protecting lives and property.