

## ***“Have a Safe and Happy Christmas”***

***Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service is working towards promoting a positive message to keep people safe when celebrating throughout the Christmas period.***

Christmas is a very busy time with lots of distractions. More fire deaths occur in December and January than any other months of the year.

It's important that you take time to think about the extra fire risks that the festive season brings.

You are likely to have more lights and candles decorating your house and more people coming to visit - which means there is more cooking, drinking and smoking taking place. All the normal risks are increased so it is important to be aware in order to keep safe.

Fires are a real danger as people light coal fires and have candles in their homes. This, coupled with a greater alcohol intake than normal, can "take the edge" off people's awareness of the dangers

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, RoSPA, says "it's a blunderful life" at Christmas and has listed the accidents that lead to more than 80,000 people ending up at Accident and Emergency departments nationwide during the 12 days of Christmas.

[Candles](#)

[Fire Escape Plan](#)

[Heaters](#)

[Electrical Safety including tree lights](#)

[Kitchen safety](#)

[Cigarettes](#)

[Smoke Alarm](#)

[Check on elderly relative and neighbours – make sure they are safe from fire.](#)

## Tree Lights and Decorations



- Never leave trees and decorations near an open fire or lit candles.
- All electrical decorations and fairy lights should be checked and replaced if they are over 10 years old. New manufacturing standards have been enforced since 1992.
- Ensure that all Christmas decorations used outside are designed for that purpose and do not create a fire hazard or electrical danger.
- Fairy lights, Christmas tree lights, multiple sets of lights and other kinds of decorative lights get used less often than your everyday lights, and they need more care.
- Check the fuses are the right type (see the box for the maximum size of fuse you should use).
- If bulbs blow, replace them.
- Don't leave fairy lights on when you go out or when you go to sleep.
- Don't let the bulbs touch anything that can burn easily, like paper.
- Don't overload sockets.

## Candle Safety



- Never leave candles unattended and remember to extinguish it before you go to sleep.
- Extinguish the candle before it burns into the holder
- Outdoor candles should never be used indoors
- Burn all candles well out of the reach of children & pets.
- Don't lean across a candle – you could set your clothes or hair on fire.
- Always place candles on a heat resistant surface. Tea lights and night lights can melt plastic surfaces such as top of TV and the side of bath tub.

## Fire Escape Plan



### ESCAPE:

Do you know what you should do if there's a fire? Are you sure? Does everyone who lives in your home know?

There's no time to stop and think and wonder what's the best thing to do. The situation can change in seconds. Half a minute after the smoke alarm goes off, an entire floor of your house could be filled with dense smoke.

**Plan together**

Include everyone who lives in your home, especially children, older people and lodgers.

Talk through your escape plan, including what to do and what not to do in

**Choose an escape route**

The best escape route is your normal way in and out of your home. Think of any difficulties you may have getting out, for example in the middle of the night.

Choose a second escape route, in case the first one is blocked.

Keep both escape routes clear of obstructions.

If there are older people or children in the household, plan the order you'd escape in, so that if you have to go out of a window you can help them down in the case of a fire.

**Think about a refuge**

If you can't escape you will need to find one room to take refuge in- this is particularly important if you have difficulty moving around or going down stairs on your own

**Make sure everyone knows where you keep keys**

Decide where the keys to doors and windows should be kept, and always keep them there. Everyone in your household should know the location.

**Make sure everyone knows what to do**

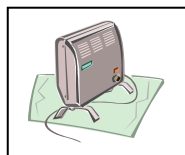
Go through all the points about what to do in a fire  
Everyone should know the dos and don'ts.

- Put your address by the phone so children can read it out to the emergency services.
- Put a reminder of what to do in a fire somewhere prominent, like on the door of the fridge.

**Practise the plan**

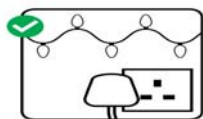
Take a few minutes to "walk through" the plan with everyone in the household. Regularly remind everyone of what to do and what not to do in a fire.

## Heaters



- Always position heaters so the back is against a wall and they are facing the room.
- Switch heaters off if you are not in the room and also when you go to bed.

- Portable gas heaters should have the cylinders stored and changed outside or in a well ventilated atmosphere
- Do not place heaters near curtains or furnishings and never use them for drying clothes.



## Electrical

Electricity is everywhere in our homes, and it's a very useful part of our lives. Yet it only takes one old or poorly wired plug to prove just how powerful it is. The wires don't even need to touch for a spark to jump and a fire to start.

Don't get too casual with electricity. Just because there's no flame doesn't mean there's no fire risk

Ensure you switch off fairy lights and unplug them before you go to bed, or leave the house. Check your Christmas tree lights conform to the British Standard (BS EN 60598).

Always use an RCD on outdoor electrical equipment (a safety device that can save lives by instantly switching off the power if there is a fault). Don't overload sockets – ensure only one plug per socket. Make sure plugs are turned off when they are not in use.

At night how many of your appliances are using electricity?

Obviously the fridge. The freezer, if you've got one. Maybe the clock on the cooker. The TV on standby. The video. The alarm clock. The answering machine. The mobile being recharged.

And how many are plugged into live sockets? The stereo. The kettle. The radio. The food processor. The computer. You name it.

**Each one is connected to enough power to start a fire instantly. Check your electrics.**



## Kitchen Safety

Nearly two thirds of all domestic fires happen because of cooking. That's an awful lot of fires. The kitchen is the single most dangerous place in your home.

The fact is that time and again it's the same problems that cause fires in kitchens across the country. If you know what those problems are, the chances you'll have a fire in your kitchen are hugely reduced.

## Cigarettes



### **Smoking can kill you very quickly. Overnight, in fact.**

More people die in fires caused by smoking than in fires with any other single cause. Why?

### **Tobacco keeps burning**

Tobacco is manufactured to stay alight, especially cigarette tobacco. It can quietly smoulder out of sight, starting a slow, deadly fire.

### **Night time is the killer time**

People often smoke late at night when they're tired or have been drinking. They often fall asleep while smoking. Or they don't notice that a cigarette is still burning.

## Smoke Alarms



- Check smoke detector batteries regularly and practice home escape plans so that you'll be prepared in the event of a fire.
- Ensure you have a multi-purpose dry chemical fire extinguisher in your home. Keep the extinguisher near an exit so if the fire spreads rapidly, you can leave the home quickly.
- Never use hairspray or spray adhesive on a real Christmas tree to prevent the needles from dropping off to the floor. It is highly inflammable and therefore, a serious fire risk. Consider using an artificial Christmas tree, maybe less desirable but cleaner.
- Never leave trees and decorations near an open fire or lit candles.
- All electrical decorations and fairy lights should be checked and replaced if they are over 10 years old. New manufacturing standards have been enforced since 1992.
- Ensure that all Christmas decorations used outside are designed for that purpose and do not create a fire hazard or electrical danger.

***And last but not least;-***

***Take time to check on older relatives and neighbours this Christmas, as they are at greater risk from fire.***

***WILTSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE  
SERVICE WISH YOU A SAFE  
AND HAPPY CHRISTMAS.***

