

December 10, 2004

## **Holiday Season Safety:**

Once again we are in the holiday season. Many activities are being conducted and they are what make the holiday season so enjoyable. While you are planning your holiday activities don't forget to plan for your safety and that of your family and friends. Here are some tips that will make your holiday season safer:

### **Decorations**

- Wear gloves while decorating with spun glass "angel hair." It can irritate your eyes and skin. A common substitute is non-flammable cotton. Both angel hair and cotton are flame retardant when used alone. However, if artificial snow is sprayed upon them, the dried combination will burn rapidly. When spraying artificial snow on windows or other surfaces, be sure to follow directions carefully. These sprays can irritate your lungs if you inhale them. Use only non-combustible or flame resistant materials.

### **Fireplaces**

- Do not burn evergreens or wreaths in the fireplace or in a wood stove to dispose of them. They are likely to flare out of control and send flames and smoke into the room. Also, do not burn wrapping paper in the fireplace because it often contains metallic materials which can be toxic if burned. Use care with "fire salts," which produce colored flames when thrown on wood fires. They contain heavy metals that can cause intense gastrointestinal irritation and vomiting if eaten. Keep them away from children.

### **Candles**

- Never use lighted candles near trees, boughs, curtains/drapes, or with any potentially flammable item.

### **Toys and Gifts**

- Be especially careful when you choose toys for infants and small children. Be sure anything you give them is too big to get caught in the throat, nose or ears. Avoid toys with small parts that can be pulled or broken off. If you are giving toys to several children in one family, consider their age differences and the chances that the younger children will want to play with the older kids' toys.

### **Trees**

- Many artificial trees are fire resistant. If you buy one, look for a statement specifying this protection. A fresh tree will stay green longer and be less of a fire

hazard than a dry tree. When the trunk of a tree is bounced on the ground, a shower of falling needles shows that the tree is too dry. Place the tree away from fireplaces, radiators and other heat sources. Because a heated room will dry out a tree very rapidly, keep the stand filled with water while the tree is indoors. Place the tree out of the way of traffic and do not block doorways. Use thin wires to secure a large tree to walls or the ceiling. These wires can be almost invisible.

### Lights

- Indoor or outside, use only lights that have been tested for safety by a recognized testing laboratory which indicates conformance with safety standards. You should check each set of lights, new or old, for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections and throw out the damaged sets. Before using lights outdoors, check the labels to make sure they have been certified for outdoor use. Never use electric lights on a metallic tree. The tree can become charged with electricity from faulty lights, and a person touching a branch could be electrocuted.

### Security

- You should not carry large amounts of cash when shopping. Keep packages in your car out of sight. Be aware of your surroundings. Use your home burglar alarm. If you plan to travel for the holidays don't discuss your plans with strangers and have a trusted neighbor keep an eye on your home.

### Parties

- Never drink and drive. Provide non-alcoholic drinks for designated drivers and other guests. Remember more than half of all traffic fatalities are alcohol-related.

**Safety Tip: The holiday season is a time of excitement and fun. Celebrate the season safely and you will have an enjoyable and merry holiday season.**



