Winter holidays are a time for families and friends to get together. But that also means a greater risk for fire. Following a few simple tips will ensure a happy and fire-safe holiday season.

**HOLIDAY DECORATING**

- Be careful with holiday decorations. Choose decorations that are flame resistant or flame retardant.
- Keep lit candles away from decorations and other things that can burn.
- Use lights that have the label of an independent testing laboratory. Some lights are only for indoor or outdoor use, but not both.
- Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Connect no more than three strands of mini light sets and a maximum of 50 bulbs for screw-in bulbs.
- Use clips, not nails, to hang lights so the cords do not get damaged.
- Keep decorations away from windows and doors.

**HOLIDAY ENTERTAINING**

- Test your smoke alarms and tell guests about your home fire escape plan.
- Keep children and pets away from lit candles.
- Keep matches and lighters up high in a locked cabinet.
- Stay in the kitchen when cooking on the stovetop.
- Ask smokers to smoke outside. Remind smokers to keep their smoking materials with them so young children do not touch them.
- Provide large, deep ashtrays for smokers. Wet cigarette butts with water before discarding.

**BEFORE HEADING OUT OR TO BED**

- **Blow out** lit candles when you leave the room or go to bed. **Turn off** all light strings and decorations before leaving home or going to bed.

**FACTS**

- December is the peak time of year for home candle fires.
- **Roughly two out of five** home fires start in the kitchen.
- Unattended cooking is the leading cause of home fires.