



# CENTRAL COUNTY FIRE HOLIDAY NEWSLETTER

Serving the Cities of Burlingame and Millbrae and the Town of Hillsborough



December

### What's Inside:

- Preparing for the Heating Season
- Christmas Tree Safety
- Holiday decorating
- Cooking Safety Tips

## PUT A FREEZE ON WINTER FIRES

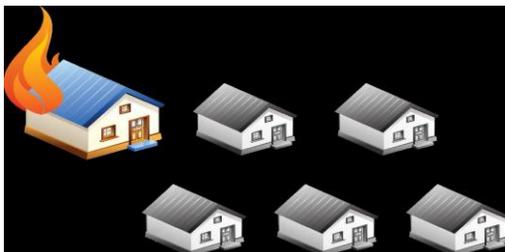


While a warm home and a hot meal on a cold winter's day may conjure up thoughts of safety and security, the unfortunate reality is that winter is the leading time of year for home fires in the United States. Home fires occur more in winter than in any other season. As you stay cozy and warm this winter season, **be fire smart!**

Half of all home heating fires occur in the months of



Heating equipment is involved in **1 in every 6 reported home fires** and **1 in every 5 home fire deaths**.



Keep portable generators outside, away from windows and as far away as possible from your house.

Central County Fire Department is committed to educating the public about simple ways to stay safe from fire this holiday season.

## PREPARING FOR THE HEATING SEASON

**Get ahead of the Winter Freeze.** It's not too early to begin preparing for the heating season. Although periods of extreme cold cannot always be predicted far in advance, weather forecasts can

*"Home fires occur more in winter than any other season."*



sometimes provide you with several days' notice. Listen to weather forecasts

regularly and check your emergency supplies whenever a period of extreme cold is predicted.

(For more information, please see the Resources section for link to “Preparing for the Heating Season Tip Sheet”).

## CHRISTMAS TREE SAFETY

A small fire that spreads to a Christmas tree can grow large very quickly. Christmas trees can remain relatively fire resistant. Follow a few simple Christmas tree & holiday decoration fire safety tips to ensure Happy Holidays.

- ❖ **Recut the trunk** at least one inch above the old cut as soon as you get it home. This allows it to continue to pull moisture into its foliage.
- ❖ **Keep the trunk in water** immediately



after it is recut. Moisture is the key to keeping the tree fresh and thereby enhancing its fire resistance. If the tree will be kept outside for a few days, stand it in a bucket of water until you are ready to bring it indoors.

- ❖ **Clean the stand.** Before placing the tree in a sturdy stand (appropriate for the size of tree), rinse the stand with a capful of bleach mixed in water. This reduces the growth of organisms.
- ❖ **Locate the tree away from sources of heat.** Avoid placing the tree near a heater outlet, woodstove or fireplace. Put it in the coolest location

possible. Never leave a lighted tree unattended. Caution: be careful not to block a door with the tree or rearranged furniture.

- ❖ **Check the water level in the stand daily.** Never let the water level go below the bottom of the trunk. Commercial floral preservatives can also be added to the water to help keep the tree fresh.
- ❖ **Carefully control lights on the tree.** Miniature holiday lights should be used on trees. Standard-size holiday tree lights generate heat, which accelerate the rate of drying. Do not leave lights turned on for prolonged periods or leave them unattended. Caution: make sure all electrical cords have no frayed or cracked wires or broken sockets before placing them on the tree. Do not attempt to repair a worn light set! Throw it away and purchase a new replacement.
- ❖ **Remove the tree immediately after the holidays.** Even a properly cared for cut tree will eventually die. Take it to a recycle center or leave for your refuse collector.

(For more information, please refer to the Resources section for link to “Christmas Tree Safety Tips Sheet”).

## HOLIDAY DECORATING



Decorating homes and businesses is a long standing tradition during the holiday season. There’s nothing like setting a festive holiday mood with beautiful decorations. Every room can use a Christmas touch. Unfortunately it’s these decorations that increase the chance of fire. Look for and eliminate potential danger spots near candles, fireplaces, trees, and/or electrical connections.

Make an emergency plan to use if a fire breaks out anywhere in the home. See

that each family member knows what to do. PRACTICE THE PLAN! So as you deck the halls this holiday season, be fire smart.

(For more information, please refer to the Resources section for link to “Holiday Decorating Safety Tips” & “Escape Planning Tips”).

## COOKING SAFETY TIPS

The kitchen is the heart of the home, especially during the holidays when there is a lot of activity and people at home; safety in the kitchen is important. Cooking is often a relaxing and fun task



that brings family and friends together, and it provides a great way to showcase your creativity and love of good food.

*But cooking is also the number one cause of home fires and home injuries. Being mindful while you cook, however, can go a long way to helping prevent fires.*

## Safety considerations for cooking with oil

Oil is a key ingredient found in the majority of today’s kitchens. Whether a recipe calls for frying or sautéing, we include oil in almost all of our daily cooking. When using any of the many oils to prepare your meals like olive, canola, corn or soybean, consider the following safety tips when cooking:

- Always stay in the kitchen when frying on the stovetop.
- Keep an eye on what you fry. If you see wisps of smoke or the oil smells, immediately turn off the burner and/or carefully remove the pan from the burner. Smoke is a danger sign that the oil is too hot.
- Heat the oil slowly to the temperature you need for frying or sautéing.
- Always cook with a lid beside your pan. If you have a fire, slide the lid over the pan and turn off the burner. Do not remove the cover because the fire could start again. Let the pan cool for a long time. Never throw water or use a fire extinguisher on the fire.
- If the fire does not go out or you don’t feel comfortable sliding a lid over the pan, get everyone out of your home and call the fire department from outside. Dial 9-1-1.

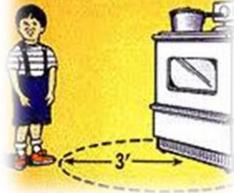


**Make sure your smoke alarms are working. Test them by pushing the test button.**

## Cooking and Kids...

**Kids love to help in the kitchen, they especially** love to be involved during holiday preparations; **however** children need to understand the importance of kitchen safety and safe cooking. Understanding the dangers of the kitchen and how to prevent them is an essential life tool that all children should learn.

- Have a “kid-free zone” of at least **3 feet around the stove** and areas where hot food or drink is prepared or carried.



- Make sure kids stay away from hot food and liquids.
- Be sure electric cords from an electric knife, coffee maker, plate warmer or mixer are not dangling off the counter within easy reach of a child.
- Keep matches and utility lighters out of the reach of children — up high in a locked cabinet.
- The steam or splash from vegetables, gravy or coffee could cause serious burns.
- Keep knives out of the reach of children.
- Have activities** that keep **kids out of the kitchen** during this busy time. Games, puzzles or books can keep them busy. Kids can get involved in Thanksgiving preparations with recipes that can be done **outside** the kitchen.

If kids are going to be in the kitchen, it's essential to supervise them at all times.

Restrict the jobs that you give them according to their age and ability. For example, pre-schoolers might only mix dough with their hands, whereas older children could peel and chop vegetables.

## Cool a Burn

Treat a burn right away. Cool the burn with cool water for at least 3–5 minutes or until the burn is less painful. Cover with a clean, dry cloth. Get medical help if needed.

## RESOURCES

All Tip Sheets can be found at

<https://ccfd.org/education-and-preparedness/community/fire-safety-tips/>

- Preparing for the Heating Season Tip Sheet
- Christmas Tree Safety Tips Sheet: [www.fire.ca.gov/media/10784/holidaytreetips.pdf](http://www.fire.ca.gov/media/10784/holidaytreetips.pdf)
- Holiday decorating Safety Tips
- Cooking Safety Tips
- Escape Planning Tips

## REFERENCE LIST

- Calfire.(2015).Retrieved from <https://www.fire.ca.gov/>
- NFPA.(2015).Retrieved from <https://www.nfpa.org/>

