



CHRISTMAS & HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS

Christmas and the holidays are an exciting and busy time but with all the joys of the holiday season come potential safety hazards that can cause injury or even death. Help prevent injuries at Christmas and during the holidays by following these tips.

Christmas Trees

- **Christmas tree safety begins with the selection and purchase of a fresh tree.**
- **When buying a live pre-cut tree, make sure the tree is still alive and healthy. A fresh tree is green, needles are hard to pull from the branches, and when bent between your fingers, needles do not break. Pull on the needles. If the needles come off easily, it is probably not in great condition. The trunk should be sticky and the limbs should be very flexible. Lift the tree and bounce the cut end on the ground, if a bunch of needles come tumbling off, it isn't a safe tree to take home.**
- **When you get the Christmas tree home, cut off the bottom two inches of trunk to expose the fresh wood. This will create a fresh, raw cut for the tree to soak in water, allow for better water absorption, and help to keep your tree from drying out and becoming a fire hazard. If you don't do this, the trunk may not be able to drink in the water in the Christmas tree stand.**
- **Keeping your thirsty Christmas tree well hydrated is the best way to prevent a tree fire. Keep the water in the stand well above the fresh-cut bottom of the trunk. There are products also available to help you keep your Christmas tree from getting too thirsty.**

- **When purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label “Fire Resistant”.**
- **Christmas trees dry out with heat, so place your tree away from heat sources like the fireplace or heater vents. The cooler the Christmas tree stays, the better.**
- **The longer your Christmas tree stays in the house, the more it dries and becomes a fire hazard. Dispose of your Christmas tree in a timely manner following Christmas.**

Christmas Lights – Inside and Outside

- **Unplug the lights and decorations when you are not home, or they are otherwise not in use. Heat + a pine tree = house fire. The lights could short out and start a fire. The trees are highly flammable. Turn off all lights when you go to bed.**
- **Check each set of tree lights for frayed wires, broken bulbs, and loose connections. Turn off lights before you go to bed or leave the house.**
- **Never run electrical cords under carpets or rugs, over nails, in traffic areas, or where there is a chance of water.**
- **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.**
- **Before using lights outdoors, check labels to be sure they have been certified for outdoor use. To hold lights in place, string them through hooks or insulated staples, not nails or tacks. Never pull or tug lights to remove them. Check all tree lights-even if you've just purchased them-before hanging them on your tree. Make sure all the bulbs work and that there are no frayed wires, broken sockets or loose connections.**
- **Plug all outdoor electric decorations into circuits with ground fault circuit interrupters to avoid potential shocks.**

- **Also, be sure to check all cords and plugs prior to using them for the year, for wear and tear. Throw out and replace any that look as though they are starting to fray or show bare wires. The smallest spark can possibly result in a very large disaster.**
- **Make sure all external electrical decorations are well protected. Keep them away from moisture, and especially keep them away from moisture and snow.**
- **Never overload an electrical receptacle with extension cords or three-way adapters. If you need to plug a lot of things into a single receptacle, use a power strip.**
- **Don't pull on an electrical cord to unplug it. Grasp the plug firmly and pull out straight so you don't bend the prongs.**
- **Replace any cord or plug that is cracked or discolored or feels hot to the touch when in use. If the original wire or plug is polarized (one prong is wider than the other), or if it has a third grounding prong, replace it with similar equipment.**
- **Call an electrician if your lights flicker and your appliances run sluggishly, or if you have a fuse that repeatedly blows or a circuit breaker that trips often. These are signs that the system is overloaded.**

Christmas Decorations

- **Use only non-combustible or flame-resistant materials to trim a tree. Choose tinsel or artificial icicles of plastic or nonleaded metals.**
- **Never use lighted candles on a tree or near other evergreens. Always use non-flammable holders, and place candles where they will not be knocked down.**
- **In homes with small children, take special care to avoid decorations that are sharp or breakable, keep trimmings with small removable parts out of the reach of children to avoid the child swallowing or inhaling small pieces, and avoid trimmings that resemble candy or food that may tempt a young child to eat them.**

- **Remove all wrapping papers, bags, paper, ribbons and bows from tree and fireplace areas after gifts are opened. These items can pose suffocation and choking hazards to a small child or can cause a fire if near flame.**

Christmas Toy Safety

- **Select toys to suit the age, abilities, skills and interest level of the intended child. Toys too advanced may pose safety hazards for younger children.**
- **Before buying a toy or allowing your child to play with a toy that he has received as a gift, read the instructions carefully.**
- **To prevent both burns and electrical shocks, don't give young children (under age ten) a toy that must be plugged into an electrical outlet. Instead, buy toys that are battery-operated.**
- **Children under age three can choke on small parts contained in toys or games. Government regulations specify that toys for children under age three cannot have parts less than 1 1/4 inches in diameter and 2 1/4 inches long.**
- **Children under age 8 can choke or suffocate on uninflated or broken balloons. Remove strings and ribbons from toys before giving them to young children.**
- **Watch for pull toys with strings that are more than 12 inches in length. They could be a strangulation hazard for babies.**

Happy Visiting At Christmas And The Holidays

- **Clean up immediately after a holiday party. A toddler could rise early and choke on leftover food or come in contact with alcohol or tobacco.**
- **Remember that the homes you visit may not be childproofed. Keep an eye out for danger spots.**
- **Traveling, visiting family members, getting presents, shopping, etc., can all increase your child's stress levels. Trying to stick to your**

child's usual routines, including sleep schedules and timing of naps, can help you and your child enjoy the holidays and reduce stress.

Fireplace Safety During The Holidays

- **Before lighting any fire, remove all greens, boughs, papers, and other decorations from fireplace area. Check to see that the flue is open.**
- **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.**
- **Do not burn wrapping papers in the fireplace. A flash fire may result as wrappings ignite suddenly and burn intensely.**

Prevent Theft & Break-ins During The Holidays

- **Santa comes down the chimney, not through the door or windows. Keep those locked and your blinds drawn when you aren't home or are sleeping/otherwise occupied. Most home burglaries happen this time of year, and it would be awful to have the presents stolen along with your other treasured possessions.**

Christmas Safety Tips For Children & When You Have A Baby In The House

- **Keep holiday plants away from children and pets. Mistletoe, holly berries, and Christmas cactus are poisonous if swallowed.**
- **If you place your child in a shopping cart, always use the safety belt and never let your child stand in or push a shopping cart.**
- **As pointed out "Toy Safety" described above, do not give children under the age of 3 toys that contain small or metal parts or toys that break easily. An easy gauge us using an empty toilet paper roll. If a toy can fit through the roll it is too small for the child.**
- **Include helmets and other protective gear when giving bicycles, skates, or skateboards.**

- **When Christmastime approaches, you are probably looking forward to celebrating the season with your baby. This may be your baby's first Christmas or the first real Christmas they may realize what is going on. As you prepare for Christmastime around your house, you need to realize that there may be several hazards for your baby. This is especially true if you have an older baby who is crawling or walking. You need to be mindful of your baby and keep your house safe during Christmas.**

- **Here are some ways that you can baby proof your house during Christmas and keep your baby safe and secure.**

- **Keep the Christmas candles to a minimum or just don't light them. Candles can be really pretty at Christmastime, but they can also be really dangerous. If you love Christmas candles, think about using electric candles or light bulbs instead for the glow. If you still want to decorate your home with Christmas candles, just don't light them. A baby can grab a candle and get burned badly. If you do burn a candle for Christmas, make sure it is completely out of reach of your baby and there is no way that it can fall over by pulling on a table cloth or doiley.**

- **Don't ever leave your baby unattended with a Christmas tree. Keep all your cords and breakable ornaments out of reach of baby. If your baby is crawling, make sure to place the breakable ornaments higher than they can reach, and the same goes for walking. If your baby is walking, you may just want to keep your breakable Christmas ornaments in the box this year. Make sure that the Christmas tree is anchored so that your baby can't flip it over. Don't place wrapped presents under the tree where your baby can reach them. The wrapping paper and bows will go straight into your baby's mouth and they can choke on it.**



MANN LAW FIRM
646 Walnut Street
Post Office Box 1643
Terre Haute, Indiana 47808-1643
Telephone: (812) 232-0107
Telecopier: (812) 232-3414

www.MannLawFirm.com

Sources American Academy of Pediatrics; SafeUSA; U.S. Fire Administration;
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