

Holiday Fire Safety

Trees

When purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label "Fire Resistant."

When purchasing a live tree, check for freshness because a fresh tree is less of a fire hazard. The tree should be green, needles are hard to pull from branches and when bent between your fingers, needles do not break. The trunk butt should be sticky with resin, and when tapped on the ground, the tree should not lose many needles.

Cut a few inches off the trunk of your tree to expose the fresh wood. This allows for better water absorption and will help to keep your tree from drying out and becoming a fire hazard.

When setting up a tree at home, place it away from fireplaces, radiators or portable heaters. Place the tree out of the way of traffic and don't allow it to block doorways.

Be sure to keep the stand filled with water, because heated rooms can dry live trees out rapidly.



Candles

Stay in the same room with burning candles; never leave them burning unattended.

Keep candles away from things that can burn.

Place candles out of reach of children and pets.

Keep wicks trimmed to one quarter inch.

Avoid candles with combustible items embedded in them such as twigs, flowers or leaves.

Remember to make sure you have working smoke alarms.



Lights

Never use electric lights on a metallic tree. The tree can become charged with electricity from faulty lights.

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.

Turn off all lights when you go to bed or leave the house. The lights could short out and start a fire.

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.

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. Avoid trimmings that resemble candy or food that may tempt a 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.



Orange County Sheriff's Office
Emergency 9-1-1

Non-Emergency 407-836-HELP (4357)

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ORANGE COUNTY
SHERIFF

Sheriff Jerry L. Demings

TIPS FOR A SAFE & HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON



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This holiday season, don't let the spirit of giving lull you into giving burglars, muggers, and pickpockets a better chance to do their dirty work. Crooks love the holidays as much as everyone else, but chiefly because it's an opportune time for crime.

Homes jam packed with glittering gifts. Stores, malls and downtown streets teeming with unsuspecting shoppers. People rushing around, stressed out and careless, looking for last-minute gifts, trying to get everything done. It's enough to make a crook giddy with holiday joy.

This brochure offers you some tips on how to celebrate this holiday season safely.



If You're Traveling

Get an automatic timer for your lights.

Ask a neighbor to watch your home and park in the driveway from time to time.

Don't forget to have mail and newspaper delivery stopped. If it piles up, it's a sure sign you're gone.



If You're Out for the Evening

Turn on lights and a radio or TV so that it looks like someone is home.

Be extra cautious about locking doors and windows when you leave, even if it's just for a few minutes.

Don't display gifts where they can be seen from outside.

TAKE A HOLIDAY INVENTORY

The holidays are a good time to update (or create) your home inventory. Take photos or make videos of items and list descriptions and serial numbers. If your home is burglarized, having a detailed inventory can help identify stolen items and make insurance claims easier to file. Make sure things like TVs, DVD players, stereo equipment, cameras, camcorders, sports equipment, jewelry, silver, computers, home office equipment and power tools are on the list. Remember to check it twice!



If You're Shopping

Stay alert and be aware of what's going on around you.

Parking in a well lit space, and be sure to lock the car, close the windows and hide shopping bags and gifts in the trunk.

Avoid carrying large amounts of cash. Pay with a check or credit card whenever possible.

Deter pickpockets and purse snatchers. Don't overburden yourself with packages. Be extra careful with purses and wallets. Carry a purse close to your body, not dangling by the straps. Put a wallet in an inside coat or front pants pocket.

Shopping with kids? Teach them to go to a store clerk or security guard if you get separated.

If a Stranger Comes to the Door

Criminals sometimes pose as couriers delivering gifts. And it's not uncommon for people to try to take advantage of other's generosity during the holidays by going door to door for charitable donations when there's no charity involved.

Ask for identification and find out how the funds will be used. If you aren't satisfied, don't give. Help a charitable organization you are more familiar with instead.