Holiday Safety Tips

The Iowa Illinois Safety Council and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration have formed an Alliance addressing hazards through a “Safety Starts at Home” program and is reminding those at home and in the workplace to keep ladder safety in mind when decorating for the holiday season.

Ladder Safety:
- Each Ladder is Different – Choose Wisely – Use the proper ladder for the intended task. For example, if the ladder will be used near electrical sources, use a wooden or fiberglass ladder to reduce the possibility of electrical shock.
- Inspect Before You Step – Inspect the ladder before stepping on the first rung. Make sure the ladder has been well maintained, that the rungs are clean and all parts are intact — never climb on a slippery or shaky ladder.
- Never Stand on the Top 2 Steps - Read and follow the warning stickers for highest standing levels. Remember the belt buckle rule for step ladders, “If your belt buckle is above the top step you need a taller ladder.”
- Always Face the Ladder-When climbing up and down and keep your body centered between both side rails.
- Over 5,000,000 people are injured in the home each year and falls are the number one cause. DON’T BECOME A STATISTIC.

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Fireplace Safety:
- Have the chimney inspected annually, cleaned as necessary, by a professionally chimney sweep to ensure it is clear of obstructions and creosote.
- Have a cap installed at the top of the chimney to avoid the possibility that debris or animals can block the chimney.
- Keep a fire extinguisher on hand and install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Be sure to check the batteries 2 times each year.
- Make sure the area around the fireplace is clear of potentially flammable materials. (Two feet is a good rule.)
- Never use any liquid accelerant to help start a fire.
- Make sure the fire is out before going to bed or leaving the house.
- Never burn a Christmas tree in the fireplace.

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Electrical Safety:
- Before decorating, read and follow the manufacturer’s instructions concerning installation and maintenance of all decorative electrical products.
• Ensure all electrical decorations are certified by a recognized testing laboratory such as UL, CSA or ETL. (Underwriters Laboratory, Canadian Standards Association and Environmental Testing Lab)
• Carefully inspect all cords and check for cracked, frayed, loose or bare wires.
• Always unplug cords before changing bulbs or fuses.
• Do not connect more than 3 strings of lights together. Light strings with screw in bulbs should have no more than 50 bulbs connected together.
• Never use electric lights on metallic trees.
• Keep outdoor extension cords and light strings clear of snow and standing water and well protected from the weather.

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