

A Risk Watch® Holiday Safety Guide

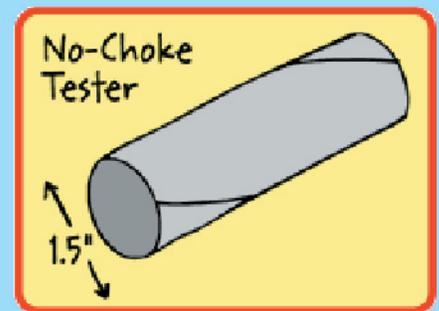
Parents: The holidays are a busy time for everyone. It's not only important to keep safety in mind at home, but also while doing your holiday shopping. The following tips will help you and your family have a safe holiday season.

Choking:

Choking occurs when food or small objects block the airway. This prevents oxygen from getting to the lungs and the brain. When purchasing toys make sure they are age-appropriate. If you have children under the age of 3, check the toys carefully for any small pieces that can be removed (small wheels on toy cars, eyes on stuffed animals and dolls, game pieces). Dispose of all plastic bags, bubble wrap and ribbon. These items can pose choking and suffocation hazards to small children.

Great Idea!

Inspect your children's toys and identify choking hazards. You can test for choking hazards by seeing if toys fit through an empty toilet paper roll. If they do, they're too small to be played with safely. Children can decorate their "no-choke tester" with pictures, stickers or their names. Toys with choking hazards should be kept away from babies, toddlers and young children.



Fire Safety:

Check the batteries in your smoke alarms and let your visitors know what your family's fire escape plan is. If you are traveling over the holidays and are staying in a hotel or someone's home, make sure you know the fire escape plan.

Holiday Decorating:

Use caution with holiday decorations and whenever possible, choose those made with flame-resistant, flame-retardant or non-combustible materials. Do not use candles to decorate Christmas trees.

Try to keep live trees as moist as possible by giving them plenty of water daily. Do not purchase a tree that is dry or dropping needles. Choose a sturdy tree stand designed not to tip over. When purchasing an artificial tree, be sure it is labeled as fire-retardant.

Children are fascinated with Christmas trees. Keep a watchful eye on them when around the tree and do not let them play with the wiring or lights.

Purchase only lights and electrical decorations bearing the name of an independent testing lab, and follow the manufacturer's instructions for installation and maintenance.

Carefully inspect new and previously used light strings and replace damaged items before plugging lights in. Do not overload extension cords.

Turn off all light strings and decorations before leaving home or going to bed.



Candles:

Did you know that more candle fires start in living rooms, dens, dining rooms, and kitchens during the month of December than any other month of the year?

Make sure candle holders are in a safe place where they can't be knocked over. Keep candles away from items that can catch fire (e.g. clothing, books, paper, bedding, flammable decorations).

Kids should never be left alone with a burning candle. Don't allow children or teens to have candles in their bedrooms. Candles, matches, and lighters should be locked up high and out of kid's sight and reach. Extinguish all candles when leaving the room or going to sleep.



Holiday Entertaining:

Remember kids and pets should stay away from cooking areas. Declare a three-foot (one metre) “kid-free zone” around the stove.

Remember that the homes you visit may not be “childproofed.” Look around your home and other environments where your child will spend time this holiday season to identify potential hazards.

For more safety information visit www.nfpa.org, www.riskwatch.org and www.sparky.org .

