
December 12, 2016
PRESS RELEASE

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HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS FROM THE SPALDING COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

It's true that there's no place like home for the holidays. With the temperature dropping, there's nothing like bundling up with the family around a fire to enjoy some holiday cheer. However, open hearths, candles and holiday cooking bring an increased risk of house fires. According to data from the United States Fire Administration, the leading cause of holiday fires is cooking.

Here are the top five cooking safety tips from the Spalding County Fire Department to help you avoid a holiday disaster:

1. Make sure you have smoke alarms on every level of your home, outside each sleeping area and in every bedroom. Test smoke alarms monthly and replace them if they are 10 years or older.
2. Never leave cooking food unattended and keep a lid nearby to smother small fires in pans, such as grease fires. Be particularly careful with oil based turkey fryers, which present a number of burn and fire hazards.
3. Don't wear loose sleeves while working over hot stoves burners – they can melt, ignite or catch on the handles of pots and pans, spilling hot oil and other liquids.
4. Have a "Kid Free Zone" of at least 3 feet around the stove and areas where hot foods and drinks are prepared or carried.
5. Plug cooking appliances directly into an electrical outlet. Never use an extension cord for a cooking appliance. It can overload the circuit and cause a fire.

Other holiday safety tips include:

1. When choosing a live Christmas tree, pick one with green needles that don't fall off when you bounce the tree trunk on the ground. Keep it away from heat sources in your home, and water it frequently.
2. Check your holiday lights for frayed wires and other damage. Never link together more than three light strands.
3. Make sure your holiday decorations are non-flammable.
4. Consider using battery-operated flameless candles instead of real candles.
5. Don't burn wrapping paper in the fireplace; it could create a large blaze that could spark a chimney fire. Also, never leave a fireplace burning when you go to sleep.

***For more information, contact Spalding County Fire Department
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