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A Season for Sharing in Fire Safety

Each year, fires occurring during the holiday season injure 2,600 individuals and cause over \$930 million in damage. Christmas trees start more than 200 home structure fires each year. This [video](#) demonstrates how fast a live, cut Christmas tree can become fully engulfed in flames. Please see these [tips](#) from the United States Fire Administration (USFA) to help ensure a safe and happy holiday.

Also, if you have a Christmas tree, there are [multiple ways to recycle it](#). Please note that any trees over 6 feet in length must be cut in half to fit inside the collection trucks. Trees that are flocked, decorated, or still attached to the tree stand will not be collected. For all residents, the following free drop-off sites accept trees (January 4-15, 2021 unless otherwise noted):

- Fire Station 55 – 955 Pt. San Pedro Rd
- Marinwood Community Center (next to Fire Station 58) - 775 Miller Creek Rd
- Al Boro Community Center - 50 Canal St
- Scotty's Market Parking Lot - Freitas Parkway at Del Ganado Rd
- Marin Resource & Recovery - 565 Jacoby St. (January 1-31, 2021; residents may drop off up to 2 trees, and flocked trees will incur a charge)

If you live in a single-family dwelling, you also may bring it curbside for free on your Green Can day from January 4 to January 15, 2021. After January 15, trees collected curbside will incur a \$5 charge.

Holiday Lights

Maintain your holiday lights. Inspect holiday lights each year for frayed wires, bare spots, gaps in the insulation, broken or cracked sockets, and excessive kinking or wear before putting them up. Use only lighting listed by an approved testing laboratory.

Do not overload electrical outlets. Do not link more than three light strands, unless the directions indicate it is safe. Connect string of lights to an extension cord before plugging the cord into the outlet. Please make sure to periodically check the wires - they should not be warm to the touch.

Please do not leave indoor holiday lights on while unattended.

Holiday Decorations

Use only non-flammable decorations. All decorations should be nonflammable or flame retardant and placed away from heat vents.

Never put wrapping paper in a fireplace. It can throw off dangerous sparks and produce a chemical buildup in the home that could cause an explosion.

Candle Care

Avoid using lit candles. If you do use them, make sure they are in stable holders and place them where they cannot be easily knocked down. Never leave the house with candles burning.

Please never place lit candles on a tree. Do not go near a Christmas tree with an open flame - candles, lighters or matches.

Fire Safety

Smoke Detectors - As in every season, have working smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors installed in your home, test them routinely on a monthly basis and keep them clean and equipped with

fresh batteries at all times. Know when and how to call for help. Also, remember to practice your home escape plan.

Holiday Cooking

Be sure not to leave cooking food unattended while preparing your holiday meal. In the event of a burn, run cool tap water over the affected area to soothe the skin. Then, cover the burn with a sterile dressing or clean cloth. This will greatly reduce the chances of infection. If the burn is severe and blistering occurs, seek medical attention or call 9-1-1 for more assistance.

[NFPA's Lisa Braxton explains how a few simple safety tips can protect you and your family from a potentially devastating home fire.](#)

What you should know about home cooking safety

Be on alert! If you are sleepy or have consumed alcohol, don't use the stove or stovetop.

Stay in the kitchen while you are frying, grilling, boiling, or broiling food.

If you are simmering, baking, or roasting food, check it regularly, remain in the kitchen while food is cooking, and use a timer to remind you that you are cooking.

Keep anything that can catch fire — oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels or curtains — away from your stovetop.

If you have a cooking fire

- Just get out! When you leave, close the door behind you to help contain the fire.
- Call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number after you leave.
- If you try to fight the fire, be sure others are getting out and you have a clear way out.
- Keep a lid nearby when you're cooking to smother small grease fires. Smother the fire by sliding the lid over the pan and turn off the stovetop. Leave the pan covered until it is completely cooled.
- For an oven fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed.

NFPA's latest [report](#) underscores the leading cause of home fires and injuries: cooking. Here are other key findings from the "[Home Cooking Fires](#)" report:

- Between 2014 and 2018, there was an average of nearly 173,000 home cooking fires per year (about 470 home cooking fires per day). These fires caused an average of 550 civilian deaths, 4,820 reported civilian fire injuries, and more than \$1 billion in direct property damage per year.
- Unattended cooking was the leading cause of cooking fires and casualties (31 percent of cooking fires and 53 percent of deaths). Clothing was the item first ignited in less than 1 percent of these fires, but clothing ignitions led to 8 percent of the home cooking fire deaths.
- Home fires caused by cooking peaked at Thanksgiving and Christmas.
- Ranges or cooktops were involved in 61 percent of reported home cooking fires, 87 percent of cooking fire deaths, and 78 percent of cooking fire injuries.
- Households that use electric ranges have a substantially higher risk of cooking fires and associated losses than those using gas ranges.
- More than one-quarter of the people killed by cooking fires were sleeping at the time. More than half of the non-fatal injuries occurred when people tried to control the fire themselves.

Learn how to prevent cooking fires using these [NFPA safety tips](#). If in the market for a new home, ask for home fire sprinklers, which can quickly respond to a cooking fire.

The Men and Women of the San Rafael and Marinwood Fire Departments wish you a safe and Healthy Holiday Season and New Year.

Please contact the San Rafael and Marinwood Fire Departments at (415) 485-3304. You may also visit us on the Internet at <http://www.srfd.org>, or <http://www.marinwood.org/mission>.

"Our Mission...is to help"

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