

Holiday Safety Tips

Every year during the holiday season, more than a hundred thousand homes are damaged or destroyed due to structural residential fires resulting in more than half a billion dollars in losses. In an effort to prevent fires during this joyous time, Paul Davis Restoration offices help spread the word in their communities about the fire risk during the holiday season and tips for fire prevention.

Below are tips to help protect your home and family from fire during the holidays.

- **Holiday Decorations**
 - Use only non-combustible or flame resistant materials near the tree.
 - Tinsel or artificial icicles should be made of plastic or non-leaded materials.
 - Never use lighted candles on a tree, near other evergreens, or other flammable materials.
 - Consider reducing the number of candles used during the Holidays or eliminating them altogether (especially if children are present). Place candles where they will not be knocked down.
- **Lights**
 - Check all 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.
 - Before using lights outdoors, check labels to be sure they are certified for outdoor use.
 - 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.
- **Trees**
 - When purchasing a live tree, check for freshness. A fresh tree is green, and when bent between your fingers, needles do not break.
 - When purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label “Fire Resistant.”
 - When setting up a tree at home, place it away from fireplaces, radiators or portable heaters. Place the tree out of the way of foot traffic.
 - Cut a few inches off the trunk of your tree. This allows for better water absorption and will help to keep your tree from drying out and becoming a fire hazard.
 - Be sure to keep the stand filled with water, because heated rooms can dry live trees out rapidly.

- **Fire Escape Plan**
 - The holidays are a good time to review your fire plan with your family.
 - Make sure everyone understands the escape routes and where to meet once outside.
 - Conduct a “fire drill” to practice your escape plan.

- **Smoke Alarms**
 - Make sure your smoke alarms are in proper working order by pushing the test button.
 - Change the batteries at least once a year.

- **Fire Extinguishers**
 - Make sure there is a working fire extinguisher in the kitchen, laundry room, and garage and that it is capable of putting out all three types of fires.
 - If you don’t know how, learn how to use it.

- **Fireplace/Chimney**
 - Be sure your fireplace and chimney have been inspected and cleaned by a professional chimney sweep.
 - Before lighting any fire, remove all greens, boughs, papers, and other decorations from fireplace area.
 - Check to see that the flue is open.
 - Do not burn gift wrapping paper, boxes, etc. in the fireplace. A flash fire may result as these items will ignite quickly and burn intensely.

If you have questions regarding safety around the home, call on the fire and water damage restoration experts at Paul Davis Restoration.