

Have A Safe Holiday Season!

The holiday season is also fire season in the home. Many of our residential fires occur during this time of year. The use of lights, candles and other decorating items increases the potential for fires in the home.

- ❖ **Smoke detectors** may save your life. Check them frequently and replace dead batteries or defective detectors immediately.
- ❖ **Electrical circuits** should never be overloaded. Don't plug an entire group of lights into each other creating a block of plugs which is then plugged into one socket. Use approved plug strips having a built-in breaker to plug lights into. Use decorations that are approved for a specific application. Don't use indoor lights outside. Turn off your decorations when you go to bed or leave the house.
- ❖ **Candles** should never be left unattended or within reach of small children. Make certain that the rising heat of a candle can't ignite anything nearby. Always extinguish candles when leaving their immediate vicinity.
- ❖ **Christmas trees** can be deadly if they are not kept watered and fresh. Remove dried out trees from the house immediately. Never dispose of a Christmas tree by burning it in the fireplace. Even cutting it up before burning does not reduce the potential fire hazard created by burning these extremely hot burning trees. Dispose of your tree by recycling it properly.
- ❖ **Extension cords** are intended for temporary use and should not be used in any permanent application. Arrange your decorations so they are near outlets. Lightweight "zip" type extension cords should never be used. If an extension cord is an absolute must, use approved plug strips with built-in breakers. Never use plug adapters that will permit more than two items to be plugged into a single outlet. Overloaded extension cords are a common cause of household fires.
- ❖ **Electrical outlets** should be checked and maintained. If you have a loose plug outlet that causes you to bend the prongs on a plug to keep it from falling out you should replace the outlet. Loose outlets can cause sparks that may cause a fire inside the wall.
- ❖ **Clothes dryers** may cause fires if not properly maintained. The most common cause of dryer fires is the failure to properly clean the lint screen. Not only should you clean the screen before every load, but you should frequently check the exhaust area behind the screen. A build-up of lint can easily be ignited by the heat from the dryer and spread to adjacent areas.
- ❖ **Appliances** should be unplugged after use. Coffee makers, toasters, irons, etc... that are left plugged in when not in use can experience shorts that can cause fires.
- ❖ **Floor furnaces** should be treated with caution. Never place anything above a floor furnace grate, especially throw rugs. Enough heat is generated to easily cause a fire. Protect young children by placing barriers around a floor furnace to keep them off of the grate.
- ❖ **Fireplaces** should be checked before use. Make certain that the damper is open and the chimney is free of any obstructions. Make certain that trees have not grown over the chimney opening since it was last used. Keep the area around the fireplace free of items that may ignite. Always use the screen or glass doors to prevent sparks from flying out and starting a fire. Never use the fireplace to burn gift wrap or Christmas trees.

