

# Holiday Home Safety Checklist



## Safely Hang Outdoor Decorations

If you're using a ladder, position it on a level surface before stepping onto it; if necessary, ask a second person to hold the ladder secure. Be aware of the ladder's weight limit and wear shoes or boots that won't slip.

Make sure that all of the lights and any extension cords you use are waterproof and rated for outdoor use. Check that the lights and extensions cords aren't frayed or worn and keep connections above ground, snow, and water.

Don't use nails or staples to hang your lights—**instead, use insulated light clips**. Be sure to use an appropriate outlet. Your source of power should come from a **ground fault circuit interrupter outlet**.

If possible, avoid walking on your roof to hang lights, particularly if it's rainy, windy, or icy. It's safer to hire a professional with the proper tools and equipment to handle this for you.

## Maintain a Safe Christmas Tree

If you erect a live tree, make sure it is fresh—before bringing it home, look for flexible needles that don't break easily and a trunk with sap. If you're purchasing an artificial tree, **look for the "fire-resistant" label before taking it home**.

Before placing your tree in water, remove a half-inch disk from the trunk. This makes it easier for the tree to absorb moisture. Make it a habit to water your tree every day and monitor for dryness.

When positioning your tree, place it at least three feet away from any open flame or heat source, including fireplaces, candles heat vents, and lights.

Don't overcrowd your outlets and never connect more than one extension cord. Place the cords along a wall to prevent a tripping hazard.

Before going to bed, always make sure that your Christmas lights are turned off.

Inspect light strings and throw out the ones with broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections.

## Giving and Receiving Safe Toys

Ensure that your kids have access to safety gear—including properly-sized helmets and knee or elbow pads—when riding scooters, bikes, and other riding toys.

Don't give gifts that include small balls or parts to children under the age of three—for kids under eight, steer clear of deflated balloons. It's always a good idea to **check the age label of toys** to ensure that they are appropriate for the child's age.

Check for recalls and research safety concerns associated with toys before you purchase them. Recall information is available on CPSC.gov.

Be careful of high-powered magnets—if two or more are swallowed, **they could cause serious intestinal injuries**. In general, keep these toys away from children under 14 years old.

When you purchase or receive a new toy, inspect it before use. Read through included assembly instructions and demonstrate how to use it properly. Be sure to supervise your child when they play with toys, regardless of if the toy is new or old.

## Protect Your Pets

Loose lights and wires are temptations for curious cats or dogs—use electrical cord covers and organizers to prevent furry friends from gnawing on them.

Some holiday plants and flowers are harmful or toxic for pets, **including azaleas, mistletoe, holly, and chrysanthemums**.

Beware of tinsel, ribbons, and other types of gift wrapping.

Traditional rock salts and anti-freeze are troublesome for pets. Look for snow and ice melts that are more pet-friendly, **such as those made with propylene glycol**.

Don't give your pets bones from the table or counter. The bones could splinter and cause them to choke. There are many other common holiday food items that are not good for your pet, **including candy, coffee, and grapes, and raisins**.