

GREENSBORO POLICE DEPARTMENT



Holiday Safety Tips

Christmas Trees

- When purchasing a live tree, check for freshness. A fresh tree is green, needles are hard to pull from branches and when bent between your fingers, needles do not break. The trunk butt of a fresh tree is sticky with resin, and when tapped on the ground, the tree should not lose many needles.
- When setting up a tree at home, place it away from fireplaces, radiators, or portable heaters. Place the tree out of the way of traffic and do not block doorways.
- Cut a few inches off the trunk of your tree to expose the fresh wood. 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. When purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label "Fire Resistant."

Lights

- Before using lights outdoors, check labels to be sure they have been certified for outdoor use. To hold lights in place, we recommend purchasing plastic holders designed for this purpose. As an alternative, string them through hooks or insulated staples. Never use nails or tacks. Never pull or tug lights to remove them.
- Check all tree 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.
- Plug all outdoor electric decorations into circuits with ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI) to avoid shocks.
- Always turn off all holiday lights (and inflatables, too!) when you go to bed or leave the house.

Decorations

- Use only non-combustible or flame-resistant materials to trim a tree.
- Never use lighted candles on a tree or near other evergreens. Always use non-flammable holders, and place candles where they will not be knocked down.
- In homes with small children, take special care to avoid decorations that are sharp or breakable, keep trimmings with small removable parts out of the reach of children to avoid the child swallowing or inhaling small pieces, and avoid trimmings that resemble candy or food that may tempt a young child to eat them.
- Remove all wrapping papers, bags, paper, ribbons and bows from tree and fireplace areas after gifts are opened. These items can pose choking and suffocation risks to children, and they can easily catch fire. They should be disposed of in your recycling bin, not burned in the fireplace.

Happy Visiting

- Clean up immediately after a holiday party. A toddler could rise early and choke on leftover food or come in contact with alcohol or tobacco.
- Remember that the homes you visit may not be childproofed.
- Keep a laminated list with all of the important phone numbers you or a baby-sitter are likely to need in case of an emergency. Include the police and fire department (always call 911 if it's an emergency), your pediatrician, and the national Poison Help Line, 1-800-222-1222.
- If your host is serving alcohol, designate a driver who will not imbibe.

<http://www.gsopd.org>

Non-emergency 336-373-2222

Community Relations 336-373-2636



Toy Safety

- Select toys to suit the age, abilities, skills and interest level of the intended child. Toys too advanced may pose safety hazards for younger children.
- Before buying a toy or allowing your child to play with a toy that he has received as a gift, read the instructions carefully.
- To prevent both burns and electrical shocks, don't give young children (under age 10) a toy that must be plugged into an electrical outlet. Instead, buy toys that are battery-operated.
- Children under age 3 can choke on small parts contained in toys or games. Government regulations specify that toys for children under age 3 cannot have parts less than 1-1/4 inches in diameter and 2-1/4 inches long. Watch for pull toys with strings that are more than 12 inches in length as they can be a strangulation hazard for babies.
- If your child is going to be getting something that he can ride, such as a bicycle, inline skates, scooter, or a skateboard, be sure that he also gets the appropriate protective equipment, including a helmet and pads.

Fireplaces

- Clean creosote buildup before winter sets in.
 - 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 wrapping papers in the fireplace. A flash fire may result as wrappings ignite suddenly and burn intensely.

Traveling

- Plan your route . Let others know when you depart and plan to arrive. Carry a cell phone with you, if possible. Get a weather forecast.
- If you feel yourself getting tired, pull over and take a break. Choose a safe location that is well lighted and has other people around.
- Make sure your car is in good working order. Carry an emergency breakdown kit, first aid kit, and fire extinguisher in your trunk.
- **If you experience a breakdown**, pull as far onto the shoulder as possible and turn your emergency flashers on. If you have a cellular phone, summon assistance from a reputable source or call for law enforcement response. Otherwise, raise your hood or tie a streamer to your antenna, and await assistance inside your locked vehicle.
- If a stranger stops, speak to them through a partially rolled-down window, and ask them to go to a phone and call police or a tow service; do not exit your vehicle until a law enforcement officer or tow operator are on scene. On longer trips, be sure you have water, food, and blankets in the vehicle.
- Should you observe anyone pulled off the roadway and apparently stranded or in need of assistance, extend them the courtesy of reporting your observation to the police at your earliest opportunity.
- Buckle up, and NEVER drink and drive.
- Ask a trusted neighbor to watch your home while you are away, shovel snow if necessary, and park in your driveway from time to time.
- Have mail and newspaper delivery stopped. If it piles up, it's a sure sign your not at home.
- Get an automatic timer for the lights in your home. Set them to randomly turn on and off.
- If you have an alarm be sure to set it. This would be a great time to make sure your alarm company has all of your updated emergency contact information so they can make the appropriate notifications should something happen while you are away.
- Don't leave your vehicle running and unattended. And, never leave children or pets unattended in your vehicle.

Other Tips

- If a stranger comes to the door, beware. Unfortunately, some people try to take advantage of others' generosity during the holidays by going door-to-door for charitable donations when there is no charity involved. Before opening the door, look through a window or peephole. If you don't know the person, first talk with him or her through the door without opening it. Ask for identification, and find out how the funds will be used. If you aren't satisfied, don't give. Help a charitable organization you know and like instead.
- Dispose of your gift packaging discreetly. Don't let your trash broadcast what's inside your house to thieves.
- Avoid cold weather injuries. Dress in loose layers to keep warm. Stay dry and don't get overheated.
- Keep children and pets away from poisonous plants such as holly, mistletoe, poinsettias, and ivy.
- Be a good neighbor. Report suspicious behavior. Share these tips with friends and family.