



News Release

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‘Tis the Season to Stay Safe

It's a time for celebration, but it's also a time when house fires, vehicle accidents and personal injuries increase. That is why SCF Arizona, the state's leading advocate for safety, provides holiday reminders on how to stay safe during the holidays.

Step carefully

A major cause of holiday accidents in the home are falls from ladders, as people string lights or decorate. SCF Arizona's loss control consultants say the same safety precautions when using a ladder at work should be applied at home.

- Use a sturdy ladder approved by a recognized testing agency. Do not climb chairs or other furniture in lieu of an approved ladder.
- When using a ladder to put up lights around the house, avoid possible obstructions such as tree branches and power lines. If a ladder comes in contact with a power line, fatal electrocution could result.
- Place the ladder on level ground and be sure to use the 4-to-1 rule: for every 4 feet between the ground and the upper point of ladder contact, move the ladder's base 1 foot from the base of the building.
- Always face the ladder when climbing and wear slip-resistant shoes.
- Keep your body centered on the ladder and don't overreach. Use your belt buckle as a gauge. If the belt buckle passes beyond the ladder rail, you are more likely to fall.
- Never use the ladder's top rung as a step.

Fire Safety

Fires during the holidays kill more than 400 people, injure 1,650 more and result in an estimated \$990 million in property damages annually, according to the U.S. Fire Administration. The organization adds that the main causes of these incidents are related to Christmas trees, holiday lights or decorations, and the misuse of candles.

The Administration offers these fire-prevention tips:

- If you have a natural tree, do not place it near a heat source, do not put it up too early or take it down too late, and make sure it is watered daily.
- If using a metallic or artificial tree, make sure it is flame retardant.

- Inspect holiday lights for frayed wires, bare spots and broken or cracked sockets.
- Do not overload electrical outlets and periodically check wires to make sure they are not warm to the touch.
- Avoid using lighted candles. If candles are used, keep them away from children and place them in areas where they are out of the way and not easily knocked over.
- Never put candles on a tree.
- Test smoke detectors (at least monthly) to make sure they are working.

On the road

If you're on the road during the holidays, remember, so are a lot of other people. Not only are there more drivers, but there is likely an increase in motorists who are impaired or unfamiliar with their surroundings.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that 3,235 people died as a result of traffic crashes in December 2007. Nearly one third of those were killed in wrecks involving drunken driving.

For more information on holiday safety, call SCF Arizona Corporate Communications at 602.631.2810.