

# Ten Years of Holiday Safety Tips

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## 1. Candles

1. Do not leave a burning candle unattended
2. Supervise children and pets around burning candles and put away matches or lighters
3. Burn them in containers made especially for candles, and set those containers on heat-resistant surfaces
4. Do not set near trees, curtains, decorations or other combustible items
5. Place candles 3" or more apart from each other
6. Keep them away from drafts
7. Trim wicks to  $\frac{1}{4}$ "
8. Buy candles labeled lead-free or from U.S. manufacturers
9. Use a battery-operated candle



## 2. Car Travel

### Check car condition before traveling

- battery
- wiper fluid
- brakes
- mirrors
- tires (condition, pressure)

### Keep an emergency preparedness kit in the vehicle always

- chains
- blankets and food, water
- sand, shovel,
- flashlight, flares
- good condition spare tire
- snow scraper

1. **Avoid tailgating**
2. Stay rested and avoid driving while drowsy
3. Avoid traffic when possible by leaving early and planning ahead
4. Ensure every passenger is properly buckled up
5. Refrain from cell phone use or other distractions (navigation systems) while driving
6. Stay alert and practice defensive driving
7. Designate a sober driver or arrange for a taxi or rideshare service to ensure you and/or guests make it home safely after a holiday party
8. Slow down if wet or icy roads are present, and allow a safe distance from other vehicles
9. Use proper signals (well in advance) for lane changes or turns
10. Avoid hard braking in wet or icy conditions to avoid skidding or sliding



### 3. Cooking /Baking / Kitchens / Food Related

1. Wash hands frequently, especially when handling food
2. Maintain safe distance between raw meat and fresh produce, and do not wash meat before cooking
3. Avoid cross-contamination by using separate cutting boards, plates, and utensils for uncooked and cooked meats and produce
4. Use a food thermometer to ensure meat is cooked to a proper temperature
5. Quickly refrigerate hot or cold leftover food (within two hours of being served)
6. Cut poultry leftovers in small pieces so they can chill quickly
7. Consume leftovers within 3-4 days (if they are properly refrigerated and safely reheated to at least 165 degrees)
8. Never leave cooking / baking unattended
9. Know the Heimlich Maneuver to prevent choking on food
10. Do not wear loose clothing when cooking / or around flames
11. Frying Turkeys! Defrost first; lower turkey slowly; to avoid oil splatter, burns and fires. Keep children and pets away from the fryer to prevent tipping. Oil stays dangerously hot for several hours
12. Ensure kitchens or other cooking areas are well ventilated, and never leave cooking food unmonitored
13. Wear proper protective equipment (gloves, etc.) when handling hot equipment or appliances
14. Keep children away from boiling water or hot stoves and ovens
15. Have a fire extinguisher safely stored in every kitchen and cooking area
16. Cook large quantities of meat for the right amount of time and at the right temperature (for advice, contact the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-674-6854).
17. Don't overload your outlets with appliances



## 4. Trees

1. Pick a green tree: fresh spruce and pine trees have needles that don't break easily
2. Cut off 2" from the end of the trunk
3. Set the tree in a water-filled stand
4. No blocking doorways or foot paths
5. Place away from heat sources like fireplaces and radiators
6. Make sure the tree has a stable platform so children or pets don't knock it down
7. Refill water as needed, at least every day
8. Use artificial trees that are labeled as fire-resistant. No live trees indoors on campus.



## 5. Decorations

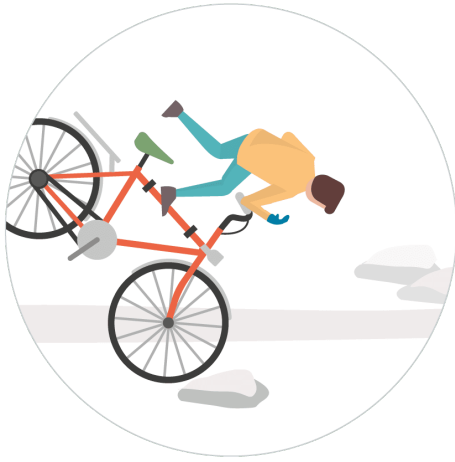
1. Use indoor lights inside your house and outdoor lights outside
2. Check that lights are in safe, working order
3. Use no more than three strings of lights on a single extension cord
4. Keep cords out of the way, but not under rugs where they could cause a fire or tripping hazard

5. Unplug lights when you leave or go to bed
6. No edible or breakable decorations on lower branches in homes with small children and pets
7. Keep bells on the bottom branches to let you know if someone is in the tree
8. Use a ladder to place decorations as needed
9. keep belly button within the rails
10. 3 points of contact with ladder always
11. Don't hang anything on sprinkler heads



## 6. Gifts - Wrapping/unwrapping gifts

1. Exercise common sense when wrapping gifts, making it simple for the recipient to open
2. Never use sharp objects (such as razor blades or pocket knives) to open gifts
3. Keep tight-bounding materials to a minimum (hard to remove ribbons, etc.)
4. Refrain from last-minute gift wrapping when overly tired or rushed
5. Keep children away from scissors or sharp tape dispensers and ribbons when gift wrapping
6. Ensure a First Aid Kit is close by always in case of cuts or lacerations
7. Do not burn wrapping paper in fireplace



## 7. Dangerous Gifts

1. Choose toys in the correct age range
2. Select toys for children under 3 that do not have small parts (choking hazards)
3. Avoid toys that must be plugged into an electrical outlet for children less than 10 years of age
4. Practice caution with toys containing button batteries or magnets
5. Include safety gear when gifting scooters, bikes, and other riding equipment
6. Visit [recalls.gov](https://www.recalls.gov) to ensure that nothing on your shopping list has already been recalled



## 8. Shopping

1. Shop ahead and avoid shopping malls days before or after major holidays
2. Visit shopping malls early when they first open to avoid crowds and traffic
3. Have a clear list to keep visits short and as stress-free as possible

4. Park in a less hectic area, even if it means a longer walk to the entrance
5. Avoid distractions while driving (e.g., phones, other passengers talking, etc.)
6. Stay calm and avoid upsetting interactions with other drivers
7. Verify sellers of online purchases
8. Do not leave valuables and packages in sight in your car
9. Do not leave deliveries on your doorstep. Have a neighbor hold your packages and mail if traveling during the holidays

## 9. Fires / Fireplaces

1. Have your fireplace inspected by a professional
2. Clean it
3. Use a screen when in use
4. Don't burn wreaths which can cause flare-ups
5. Don't burn present wrapping paper -- metallic papers are toxic and some papers could float out of the chimney
6. Have a fire extinguisher nearby and know how to use it
7. Test the function of your smoke detectors, replace the batteries annually



## 10. Children and pet choking hazards

1. Refrain from using breakable ornaments with young children in the home, or keep them out of reach if they are used (placed higher in Christmas trees or other decorations)



2. Keep salt dough ornaments away from pets, as they are dangerous if ingested
3. Store extra Christmas lights (replacement bulbs) out of reach of children
4. Keep batteries in a secure location that children cannot access
5. Lock up gift-wrapping decorations, such as ribbons, away from children and pets



## 11. Back strains and seasonal pains

- Shoveling snow
- Traveling with heavy luggage
- Lifting heavy decorations
- Assembling large or heavy gifts or equipment
- Cooking large or labor-intensive meals

### Safety Tips

1. Go for a wellness visit with your primary care physician pre-holiday season
2. Lift heavy packages, etc., by bending the knees and keeping the weight in your legs (vs. your back)
3. Take breaks between long periods of any activity including shoveling, cooking, or wrapping gifts
4. Avoid wearing high heels or impractical shoes when possible, and use compression socks when sitting for three hours or longer on flights
5. Relax shoulders and avoid hunching when cooking or decorating
6. Report any symptoms of dizziness, chest pains, or limb pain to a medical professional as soon as you notice them



## 11. Winter sports

### Safety tips

1. Take frequent breaks and go inside to warm up on particularly chilly days
2. Avoid severe winter weather including icy conditions, frigid temperatures, or blizzards involving low visibility and strong winds
3. Keep company, and never participate in winter sports alone
4. Be sure to properly warmup muscles by stretching and raising body temperature beforehand
5. Wear protective clothing and gear to shield harsh outdoor elements and stay safe
6. Stay alert by avoiding headphones and overly crowded areas, especially if unfamiliar
7. with the area
8. Ice skate in designated skating areas and never skate on river ice or ice that has thawed and refrozen



## 12. Poisonous plants

While seasonal and beautiful, some of the holiday season's most infamous plants are dangerous when ingested. This is a fairly well-known fact for most adults, but children and pets are often harmed by these poisonous plants every holiday season.

**The most common holiday plants to stay cautious of include: Jerusalem cherry, poinsettias, holly and mistletoe, lilies and daffodils, and amaryllis**

### Safety tips

1. Use artificial replications of poisonous plants
2. Keep real plants out of reach of children and pets
3. Never leave children or pets unattended around poisonous plants
4. Have instructions available (along with your pet's veterinarian's information) for pet sitters in case of emergency
5. If your child ingests a poisonous plant, contact your local poison control center immediately



## 13. Heart attacks

**Holiday heart syndrome** is even known to occur in healthy individuals. This syndrome is caused by the occurrence of heart arrhythmia (most frequently atrial fibrillation) after bouts of binge drinking. The first appearance of holiday heart syndrome in the medical literature **occurred in 1978**. In the research, doctors described the prevalence of cardiac rhythm disorders related to binge drinking that frequently occurred during—you guessed it—the holidays. Last year, another study found that **heart attack risk spiked 15%** during the Christmas/New Year holidays. Did you know that severe indigestion can mimic heart attack symptoms? That's one more reason for visits to the emergency department.

### Safety tips

1. Stick to established dietary restrictions during the holiday season
2. Limit alcohol consumption
3. Go for a walk after dinner
4. Keep stress to a minimum by planning as much as possible
5. Remove unhealthy leftovers from the home

## 14. Space Heaters

Space heaters generate carbon monoxide, an odorless, tasteless, poisonous gas.

### Safety tips:

1. Avoid using space heaters indoors
2. Do not leave space heaters on
3. Make sure they have “tip over protection”
4. Use a carbon monoxide monitor with fresh batteries whenever using a space heater

## 15. Electrical Hazards

### Safety tips:

1. Inspect electrical decorations for damage before use. Cracked or damaged sockets, loose or bare wires, and loose connections may cause a serious shock or start a fire.
2. Avoid overloading outlets and plug only one high-wattage appliance into each outlet at a time. Overloaded electrical outlets and faulty wires are a common cause of holiday fires.
3. Protect cords from damage. Cords pinched by furniture, forced into small spaces such as doors or windows, placed under rugs, located near heat sources, or attached by nails or staples can cause shocks or fire hazards.
4. Check decorations for a safety certification label from an Independent testing laboratory such as Underwriters Laboratories, or Intertek
5. Turn off, unplug, and extinguish all decorations when going to sleep or leaving the house.

## 16. Health Hazards

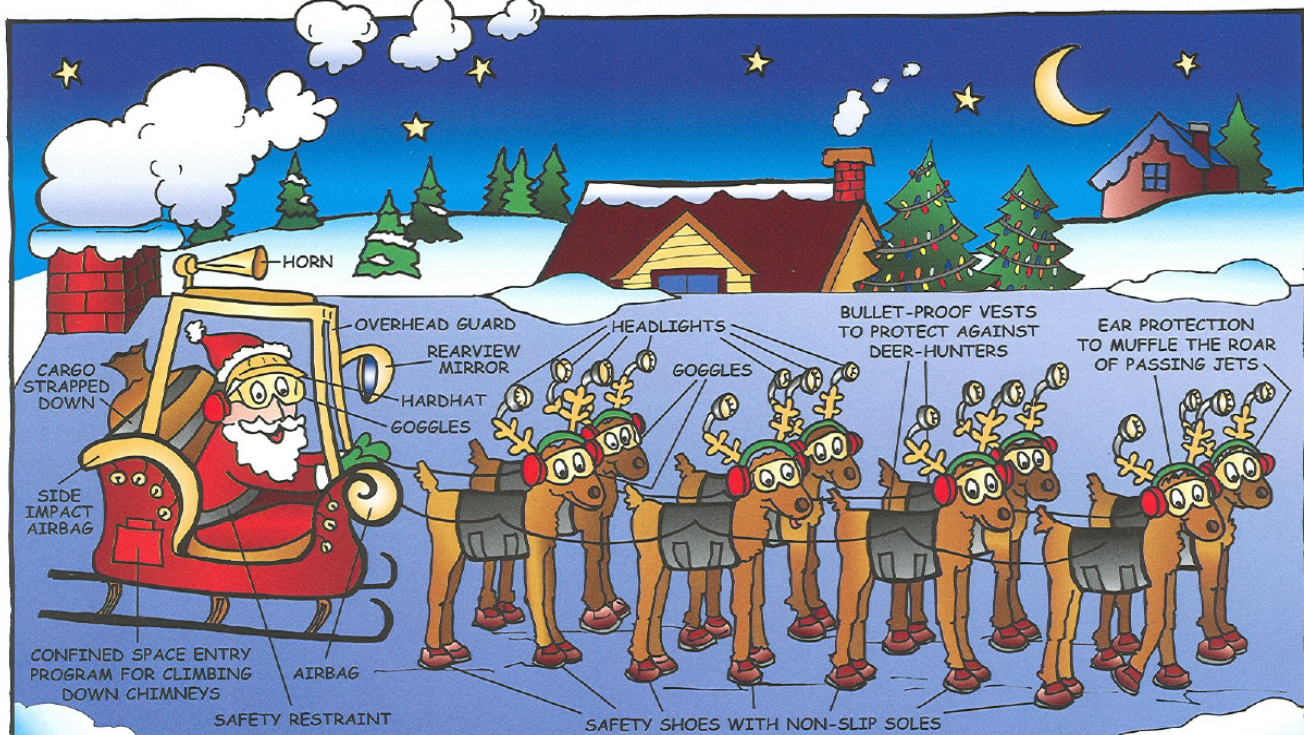
1. Avoid stress....Post election political discussions?
2. Get recommended vaccines against respiratory viruses.
3. Get tested if you have signs or symptoms of a respiratory illness
4. Practice healthy behaviors, including resting and staying home when sick.
5. Wear a disposable mask during air travel, and in large gatherings of people like stores

## 17. CDC Advice: Take Steps to Stay Healthy During the Holidays



### 8 CDC Health Tips for a Safety and Healthy Holiday

UP ON THE ROOFTOP... ***IT'S SAFETY SANTA!***



**20. Best wishes for a “Healthy and Safe” Holiday**

**From the SFSU**

**Environment, Health, & Safety Department**