

# News & Notes

## **ADDITIONAL WAYS TO STAY SAFE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON**

The following are some additional holiday safety tips from the National Safety Council: Visitors, decorations and new toys introduce danger into typically safe houses. For instance, holiday candy is everywhere. So it's understandable that a toddler might swallow the bright blue pills he found in a relative's purse under the dining table.

- Have visitors place their purses and backpacks in a secure location, such as a bedroom with a door that locks.
- Make sure holiday plants don't include tempting berries. Poisonous berries can be found on mistletoe, holly and Jerusalem cherry plants.
- Always buy helmets for new bikes, skateboards and scooters so kids can hop on safely right from the start.

Remember these hosting safety tips:

- If you'll be serving alcohol, always designate a driver in advance.
- As you plan your menu, figure out how you will handle anticipated leftovers. Cooked food should not be left at room temperature for more than two hours.
- Have plenty of clean containers on hand for divvying up leftovers, if that is your family tradition.
- Be sure raw vegetables and raw fruits are not mixed with meats, fish and protein on cutting boards or in the refrigerator.
- Follow basic food safety rules: wash your hands, utensils and preparation surfaces often; cook foods to a safe temperature; refrigerate or freeze leftovers within two hours; and never leave cooking food unattended.



"Dear, do I take Holly or Jolly with food?"

### **HOLIDAY RIDDLES**

- 1) What do you call a kid who doesn't believe in Santa Claus?
- 2) Why does Scrooge love reindeer so much?
- 3) How much did Santa pay for his sleigh?
- 4) What do you call an elf wearing ear muffs?
- 5) What do you call Santa's little helpers?
- 6) What do you call an elf that can sing and dance?
- 7) What do you call Santa when he takes a break?
- 8) Why is Santa always cast as the lead in the local musical?

**Answers on Page 2 Safety Bits and Pieces**

# Safety Matters



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## **Staying Safe This Holiday Season**

From candles to candy and trees to toys, nearly every joyful holiday tradition also carries the potential for accidents and injuries. National Fire Protection Association research indicates 43 percent of falls each year from Nov. 1 to Jan. 31 are from ladders, and another 13 percent are from roofs. Meanwhile, holiday lights are the culprit in 150 house fires annually. Holiday trees can catch fire even if they're just near an open flame, sparking electrical lights, or overheated decorations. Safety experts say a bit of forethought and preparation can head off many holiday mishaps. For these reasons please follow these holiday safety tips from the National Safety Council:

- Test electric lights and electrified decorations before putting them up. Check for worn, unsafe plugs, frayed cords and unsafe connections. Replace worn, frayed and unsafe lights and decorations.
- Never string more than 3 decorative light strands together.
- Check all lighting and extension cords for the Underwriters Laboratory (UL) label.
- Don't overload extension cords with too many items, and don't string extension cords together for any reason.
- Use indoor lights indoors and outdoor lights outdoors—never the other way around.
- When hanging lights outdoors, make sure electrical connectors are off the ground and not touching metal rain gutters. Insulated tape or plastic clips are the safest way to secure them.
- Turn off or unplug lights when you leave the house or go to bed.
- Keep fragile ornaments on wire hangars at the top of the tree, out of reach of children.
- If you have a fresh tree, be sure to water it daily. It only takes a couple of days for un-watered trees to dry into kindling.
- Keep floor decorations corralled under the tree and not underfoot. That includes tree skirts, toy trains, decorative villages, holiday figures and piles of presents.
- Refrain from decorating handrails, making it difficult for people to grasp the rails as they go up and down stairs.
- Keep stairs and walkways clear of all decorations and other obstacles which could result in trips and falls.
- If you have children or pets, place sharp or breakable ornaments higher up on the tree.
- Many holiday plants can be poisonous to people and pets. Poinsettias, mistletoe and holly berries are among those that should be avoided or displayed out of reach. The national Poison Control Center can be reached at (800) 222-1222.
- When decorating with candles, use fire-resistant holders and place them where they won't be knocked over. Never leave a candle unattended.
- While decorating, use a ladder or step stool, and make sure it's sturdy and follow directions. When you're outdoors, have someone hold the ladder steady for you. Never step on the top two rungs or steps of any ladder.
- If you use an artificial tree, make sure it's labeled as fire-resistant.
- Purchase the freshest possible live tree. Look for needles that don't come off easily or break when a branch is bent. Keep trees watered so they don't dry out and create a fire hazard.
- Never use real candles on a tree. Keep the tree away from fireplaces, radiators, space heaters or other heat sources.
- Make sure the tree stand is sturdy so the tree doesn't tip over.
- Never use electric lights on a metallic tree.
- Only use fire-resistant tree-trimming materials.



## ***Safety Bits and Pieces***

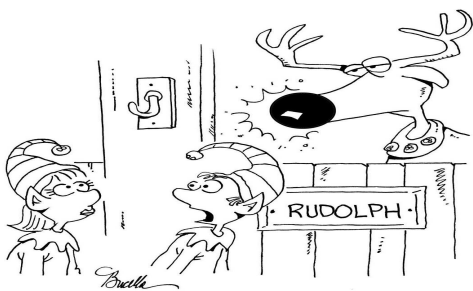
### **DRIVING ON SNOW AND ICE**

1. **Get a grip.** Tire traction is critical. Prior to driving on snow and ice check your tires for tread. To have adequate snow traction, a tire requires at least 6/32-inch deep tread.
2. **Make sure you can see.** Replace windshield wiper blades. Clean the inside of your windows thoroughly. Make sure your windshield washer system works and is full of an anti-icing fluid.
3. **Run the defroster.** In order to remove condensation and frost from the interior of windows, engage your defroster. It is critical during snowy and icy weather that the windshield remains warm. It not only helps inside the car but can help to prevent build up on the outside of the windshield
4. **Check your lights.** Use your headlights so that others will see you. It is important to ensure that your headlights and taillights are clear of snow.
5. **Give yourself a brake.** Utilizing your brakes properly on snow and ice can be the difference between sliding out of control and maintaining a safe position on the road. It is sudden stops and applying the brakes unnecessarily that can lead to loss of control of your vehicle.
6. **Watch carefully for "black ice."** If the road looks slick, it probably is. This is especially true with one of winter's worst hazards: "black ice."
7. **Remember the tough spots.** Recognizing where roads can become slick and icy can be half the battle. Bridges and overpasses are common places that will freeze first. When encountering bridges and overpasses it is important to keep acceleration and braking to a minimum.
8. **Control your speeds.** Operating a motor vehicle at a safe speed during snow and icy conditions is the one thing that we all can do to avoid most hazardous situations. It is important to remember to slow down to the level of the conditions of the road and brake early.

### **HOLIDAY RIDDLES ANSWERS**

- 1) A rebel without a Claus.
- 2) Because every single buck is dear to him.
- 3) Nothing. It was on the house.
- 4) Anything you want! He can't hear you.
- 5) Subordinate Clauses.
- 6) Elfish.
- 7) Santa Pause
- 8) Because he has such good presents!

### **ON THE LIGHTER SIDE**



"Tell Santa that Rudolph's check engine light is on."

## **TWELVE HOLIDAY SHOPPING TIPS**

1. Be alert and aware! It's easy to be distracted by the crowds, selecting the right gift or being preoccupied with holiday activities. Maintain confident body language so criminals pass you over for a "softer" target.
2. Keep shopping bags, valuables, purses and wallets close to you. Keep purses or bags closed. The more expensive an item, the closer to your body it should be. Keep a firm grip.
3. Supervise children at all times. If you feel you will be distracted from supervising them while shopping, make arrangements for a babysitter.
4. Recognize that there is safety in numbers. Shop with friends and relatives instead of going alone. Each of you can look out for each other.
5. Place any valuables in the trunk before you go shopping. Criminals are in the parking lots watching what you put in your car.
6. Do not be distracted when walking to your vehicle (talking on phone, texting, tweeting) and watch out for loiterers near your vehicle. Have an employee or security officer walk you to your car if you feel uncomfortable.
7. Park in a well-lit, well-trafficked area of the parking lot at stores and malls. Avoid parking next to vans, trucks with camper shells or cars with tinted windows. Avoid secluded and dark areas, as confrontations won't be seen and yells for help won't be heard.
8. Have your keys in your free hand well before approaching the car. It will save time in getting into the car and the keys can be used as an improvised weapon if necessary. Lock the door immediately after getting in.
9. Get in your car and leave. Don't start texting or talking on the phone or balancing your checkbook. Lock the doors and leave.
10. Watch out for friendly strangers. They may ask a question or offer to assist you with your bags to distract you or put you in a compromising situation.
11. When shopping online, make sure you are dealing with a reputable online store. On checkout, before entering your payment information, make sure the page is encrypted and secure. Keep your anti-virus, anti-phishing software up to date. Check the return policy before placing your order.
12. After opening gifts, don't advertise to criminals of your big ticket item with your trash. Tear down and cut up product boxes into small pieces to fit into garbage and recycling cans.



### **CRIME PREVENTION TIPS FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON**

- Be extra cautious about locking doors and windows when you leave the house, even for a few minutes.
- When leaving home for an extended time, have a neighbor or family member watch your house and pick up your newspapers and mail.
- Indoor and outdoor lights should be on an automatic timer.
- Leave a radio or television on so the house looks and sounds occupied.
- Large displays of holiday gifts should not be visible through the windows and doors of your home.
- Handle strangers at the door by practicing the following:
  - Be aware that criminals sometimes pose as couriers delivering gifts.
  - It is not uncommon for criminals to take advantage of the generosity of people during the holiday season by soliciting donations door-to-door for charitable causes although no charity is involved.
  - Ask for their identification and find out how the donated funds will be used.
  - If you are not satisfied, do not donate.
  - Donate to recognized charitable organizations only.

### **QUOTATION OF THE MONTH**

"As we struggle with shopping lists and invitations, compounded by December's bad weather, it is good to be reminded that there are people in our lives who are worth this aggravation, and people to whom we are worth the same."

Donald Westlake, American writer

