



State of Delaware Issue CLXXI November 2020
Produced by the Insurance Coverage Office

TEN SEASONAL SAFETY TIPS

Shorter days and cooler nights mean it's time to take some steps around the house, and within your family, to keep yourself and your loved ones safe during the transition to winter. Here are ten smart moves to make now according to the safety experts at Underwriters Laboratories (UL).

Check around the furnace before turning on the heat for the first time. Make sure there's nothing near it that's flammable. It's also a good idea to have your furnace inspected before winter sets in. (If for some reason you can't, take a look at it yourself. Make sure the flame is blue, not yellow or orange. Check the pipe from the furnace to the chimney to be sure it doesn't have rust spots and isn't disconnected at either end.) If you have radiators, remove anything that's sitting on top of them before the heat comes on.

Dress kids in light-colored clothing to help drivers see them when they are outside. As the days become shorter and darkness arrives earlier make sure your kids are clearly visible to others. Give them a flashlight and teach them how to use it properly.

Change batteries when you "fall back." Smoke alarms most often fail to sound an alarm because of missing, dead or disconnected batteries. Replace the batteries twice a year when you change the clocks (or whenever the alarm "chirps," indicating the battery is getting low). Also change the batteries in your CO detectors.

Practice your family fire escape plan before the weather gets too cold. Every family should have one, but just one in three American households do, according to the National Fire Protection Association. Having the plan is important, but it's just as critical to practice it by conducting a home fire drill at least twice a year. Frightened kids may be tempted to hide under the bed or in a closet during a fire unless you teach them exactly how to escape.

Use space heaters safely. Remember to keep combustibles "three feet from the heat" or "a meter from the heater." If you're using a fuel-powered heater, open a door or window slightly to allow fresh air to circulate. Remember to turn off your heater if you leave the house and before you go to bed.

Buy your winter storm supplies now. Buy a good supply of ice melting compound now. Check the snow shovel(s) and be sure it is up to the job and doesn't need to be replaced. If you wear cleats to navigate the ice and snow make sure you have them in a readily available spot. If you'll need your driveway plowed, book a snow plow contractor now. Don't wait until the snow starts.

Add outdoor lighting to dark places. These lights serve a dual purpose: discouraging intruders and protecting against falls. Motion sensor lights are most important around doors and near steps.

Clean leaves out of your gutters frequently in the fall. When you do, make sure you're using the right ladder for the job and using it properly. More than 90,000 people get emergency room treatment for ladder-related injuries every year. If the gutters are hard to reach, install a leaf guard to keep most of the leaves out.

Have your chimney inspected before the weather tempts you to use your fireplace or wood stove. If you use your fireplace every year, you should have the chimney cleaned every year to prevent a chimney fire. If your chimney needs repair, don't try to do it yourself; this is a job for a professional.

Get your car winter ready. Stock the trunk with a blanket, hat and gloves, a bag of salt, sand or non-clumping kitty litter for traction, plus extra windshield fluid and of course, an ice scraper and shovel. Throw in a brightly colored cloth to tie to your antenna in case you get stuck. Also toss in a few snacks, like granola bars and unsalted canned nuts, as well as bottled water (dump some of the water so the bottles are only two-thirds full in case they freeze). Have all fluid levels checked. Finally, make sure your tires are ready for bad weather.

THANKSGIVING SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

As you plan your menu during the Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Winter Holidays, remember fire safety.

Did you know Thanksgiving is the peak day for home cooking fires? **The number of home fires double on Thanksgiving.** So, let's add a pinch of fire safety to the menu.

Keep these safety tips in mind as you prepare your meal.

Turkey:

If you are roasting your turkey, make sure you set a timer. This way, you won't forget about the bird as you watch the parade or football.

If you are frying your turkey,

- Use a fryer with thermostat controls. This will ensure the oil does not become over heated.
- Thaw your turkey completely. Ice on the bird will cause the oil to splatter.
- Don't overfill the pot with oil. If you do, the oil will overflow when you add the turkey causing a fire hazard.
- Keep children and pets at least three feet away from the fryer.
- Also, always use the fryer outdoors.

Stuffing and Potatoes:

Stand by your stove when you are boiling your potatoes or frying onions for stuffing. It is best to stay in the kitchen when you are frying, boiling or broiling. If you are in the kitchen, it is easier to catch spills or hazardous conditions before they become a fire.

Vegetables:

- Keep the area around the stove clear of packaging, paper towels, and dish cloths; anything that can burn.
- Be sure to clean up any spills as they happen.
- Be prepared. Keep a large pan lid or baking sheet handy in case you need to smother a pan fire.
- Turn pot handles towards the back of the stove so you don't bump them.
- Keep toddlers and small children out of the kitchen during food preparation tasks.

By following these safety tips, you will have a delicious and fire safe Thanksgiving. Let the firefighters have dinner with their families, not yours.



"Another Diet?"

THANKSGIVING RIDDLES

- 1) What is blue and covered with feathers?
- 2) What's the key to a good Thanksgiving dinner?
- 3) What did the farmer say to the green pumpkin?
- 4) What's round, red and wears a diaper?
- 5) What smells the best at a Thanksgiving dinner?

Answers on page 2 Safety Bits and Pieces



LADDER SAFETY REMINDERS

With the holidays quickly approaching many people will be decorating their homes. Remember that ladders are tools. Many of the basic safety rules that apply to most tools also apply to the safe use of a ladder:

- If you feel tired or dizzy, or are prone to losing your balance, stay off the ladder.
- Do not use ladders in high winds or storms.
- Wear clean slip-resistant shoes. Shoes with leather soles are not appropriate for ladder use since they are not considered sufficiently slip resistant.
- Before using a ladder, inspect it to confirm it is in good working condition.
 - ◊ Ladders with loose or missing parts must be rejected. Rickety ladders that sway or lean to the side must be rejected.
 - ◊ The ladder you select must be the right size for the job.
 - ◊ The Duty Rating of the ladder must be greater than the total weight of the climber, tools, supplies, and other objects placed upon the ladder. The length of the ladder must be sufficient so that the climber does not have to stand on the top rung or step.
 - ◊ When the ladder is set-up for use, it must be placed on firm level ground and without any type of slippery condition present at either the base or top support points.
 - ◊ Only one person at a time is permitted on a ladder unless the ladder is specifically designed for more than one climber (such as a Trestle Ladder).
 - ◊ Ladders must not be placed in front of closed doors that can open toward the ladder. The door must be blocked open, locked, or guarded.
 - ◊ Read the safety information labels on the ladder.
 - ◊ The on-product safety information is specific to the particular type of ladder on which it appears. The climber is not considered qualified or adequately trained to use the ladder until familiar with this information.

The Three Point-of-Contact Climb

Factors contributing to falls from ladders include haste, sudden movement, lack of attention, the condition of the ladder (worn or damaged), the user's age or physical condition, or both, and the user's footwear.

Although the user's weight or size typically does not increase the likelihood of a fall, improper climbing posture creates user clumsiness and may cause falls. Reduce your chances of falling during the climb by:

- wearing slip-resistant shoes with heavy soles to prevent foot fatigue;
- cleaning the soles of shoes to maximize traction;
- using towlines, a tool belt or an assistant to convey materials so that the climbers hands are free when climbing;
- climbing slowly and deliberately while avoiding sudden movements;
- never attempting to move a ladder while standing on it;
- keeping the center of your belt buckle (stomach) between the ladder side rails when climbing and while working. Do not overreach or lean while working so that you don't fall off the ladder sideways or pull the ladder over sideways while standing on it.

When climbing a ladder, it is safest to utilize Three Points-of-Contact because it minimizes the chances of slipping and falling from the ladder. At all times during ascent, descent, and working, the climber must face the ladder and have two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand in contact with the ladder steps, rungs and/or side rails. In this way, the climber is not likely to become unstable in the event one limb slips during the climb. It is important to note that the climber must not carry any objects in either hand that can interfere with a firm grip on the ladder. Otherwise, Three Points-of-Contact with the ladder cannot be adequately maintained and the chance of falling is increased in the event a hand or foot slip occurs.

SAFETY TIPS OF THE MONTH

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) offers these tips for a food safe Thanksgiving:

Tip 1: Don't wash that turkey! USDA does not recommend washing raw meat and poultry before cooking. Washing raw meat and poultry can cause bacteria to spread up to three feet away. Cooking (baking, broiling, boiling, frying or grilling) meat and poultry to the right temperature kills any bacteria that may be present, so washing meat and poultry is not necessary.

Tip 2: Use the refrigerator, the cold-water method or the microwave to defrost a frozen turkey. There are three safe ways to defrost a turkey: in the refrigerator, in cold water and in the microwave oven. Thawing food in the refrigerator is the safest method because the turkey will defrost at a consistent, safe temperature. It will take 24 hours for every 5 pounds of weight for a turkey to thaw in the refrigerator. To thaw in cold water, submerge the bird in its original wrapper in cold tap water, changing the water every 30 minutes. For instructions on microwave defrosting, refer to your microwave's owner's manual. Cold water and microwave thawing can also be used if your bird did not entirely defrost in the refrigerator.

Tip 3: Use a meat thermometer. The only way to determine if a turkey (or any meat, poultry or seafood) is cooked is to check its internal temperature with a food thermometer. A whole turkey should be checked in three locations: the innermost part of the thigh, the innermost part of the wing and the thickest part of the breast. Your thermometer should register 165°F in all three of these places. The juices rarely run clear at this temperature, and when they do the bird is often overcooked. Using the food thermometer is the best way to ensure your turkey is cooked, but not overdone.

Tip 4: Leftovers are good in the refrigerator for up to four days. Take the turkey off the bone and refrigerate it as soon as you can, within 2 hours of the turkey coming out of the oven. Leftovers will last for four days in the refrigerator, so if you know you won't use them right away, pack them into freezer bags or airtight containers and freeze. For best quality, use your leftover turkey within four months. After that, the leftovers will still be safe, but can dry out or lose flavor.

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE



"Wow, that's a lot of channels for such a little TV."

THANKSGIVING RIDDLES ANSWERS

1. A turkey holding its breath!
2. The turKEY!!
3. "Why orange you orange?"
4. A baby cranberry!
5. Your nose, of course!

