

## DECORATING SAFELY FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Ten (10) tips to keep in mind while decorating:

1. Check for freshness if you buy a live tree. If the tree is fresh, its needles should be hard to pull off and don't break. The bottom of a fresh tree is sticky with resin and doesn't shed many needles when tapped on the ground.
2. Keep trees away from heat sources like fireplaces, vents and radiators. Monitor the water level and keep the tree stand filled. Put the tree up in a place that doesn't block a doorway and won't get bumped into.
3. If you get an artificial tree, look for a label that says "fire resistant."
4. Child-proof decorations. Avoid sharp, weighted or breakable decorations if you have small children. Keep pieces with small, removable parts out of reach of children and avoid those that look like candy or food so that small children won't be tempted to eat them.
5. When using lights, either indoors or outside, only use those tested for safety by a nationally-recognized testing lab.
6. Check each light set regardless if it's new or old for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires and loose connections. Throw out any damaged sets and don't use electric lights on metallic trees.
7. Make sure extension cords are rated for use.
8. Check that outdoor lights are certified for outdoor use, and then only plug them into a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protected outlet.
9. Keep burning candles where you can see them. Blow out all candles before going to bed or leaving the room or house.
10. Put candles on a stable, heat-resistant surface where children and pets can't reach them or knock them over. Keep lighted candles away from things that can catch fire easily like trees, decorations, curtains and furniture.



"Yes, healthy snacks between meals is a good thing, but..."

## HOLIDAY RIDDLES

- 1) What do you call Santa when he stops moving?
- 2) How do you scare a snowman?
- 3) Where does a snowman keep his money?
- 4) Who gives presents to baby sharks?
- 5) Where do mistletoe go to become famous?
- 6) What's the difference between Santa's reindeer and a knight?
- 7) Why was Santa short one reindeer on his last trip?

Answers on Page 2 Safety Bits and Pieces

# Safety Matters

SEASON'S GREETINGS



Produced by the Insurance Coverage Office

State of Delaware

Issue CXXIV

December 2016

## 2016 HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS

The holiday season is always a special time of year. It is also a time when busy people become careless and vulnerable to theft and other holiday crime. We can never be too careful, too prepared or too aware. Please share this information with family, friends and neighbors.

### Driving

- Avoid driving alone or at night.
- Keep all car doors locked and windows closed while in or out of your car. Set your alarm or use an anti-theft device.
- If you must shop at night, park in a well-lighted area.
- Avoid parking next to vans, trucks with camper shells, or cars with tinted windows.
- Park as close as you can to your destination and take notice of where you parked.
- Never leave your car unoccupied with the motor running or with children inside.
- Do not leave packages or valuables on the seat of your car. This creates a temptation for thieves. If you must leave something in the car, lock it in the trunk or put it out of sight.
- Be sure to locate your keys prior to going to your car.
- Keep a secure hold on your purse, handbag and parcels. Do not put them down or on top of the car in order to open the door.
- When approaching or leaving your vehicle, be aware of your surroundings.
- Do not approach your car alone if there are suspicious people in the area.
- Ask mall or store security for an escort before leaving your shopping location.

### Automated Teller Machine (ATM)

- If you must use an ATM, choose one that is located inside a police station, mall, or well-lighted location.
- Withdraw only the amount of cash you need.
- Protect your PIN by shielding the ATM keypad from anyone who is standing near you.
- Do not throw your ATM receipt away at the ATM location.

### Shopping

- Shop during daylight hours whenever possible. If you must shop at night, go with a friend or family member.
- Dress casually and comfortably.
- Avoid wearing expensive jewelry.
- Do not carry a purse or wallet, if possible.
- Always carry your Driver License or Identification Card along with necessary cash, checks and/or a credit card you expect to use.
- Even though you are rushed and thinking about a thousand things, stay alert to your surroundings.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash.
- Pay for purchases with a check or credit card when possible.
- Keep cash in your front pocket.
- Notify the credit card issuer immediately if your credit card is lost, stolen or misused.
- Keep a record of all of your credit card numbers in a safe place at home.
- Be extra careful if you do carry a wallet or purse. They are the prime targets of criminals in crowded shopping areas, transportation terminals, bus stops and on buses.
- Avoid overloading yourself with packages. It is important to have clear visibility and freedom of motion to avoid mishaps.
- Beware of strangers approaching you for any reason. At this time of year, "con-artists" may try various methods of distracting you with the intention of taking your money or belongings.

### Children

- If possible, leave small children at home with a trusted babysitter.
- Teach your child to go to a store clerk and ask for help in case your child is separated from you.
- Teach children to stay close to you at all times while shopping.
- Never allow children to make unaccompanied trips to the restroom.

(CONTINUED - SEE PAGE 2 FOR MORE 2016 HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS)

## Safety Bits and Pieces

### LIFTING SAFETY

Ask yourself the following questions before lifting any load:

1) *Have you checked the load by pushing it with your hands or feet to see how easily it moves?* If you cannot move the load with your hand/foot you should break down the load or seek assistance before moving the load.

2) *Is the load you want to lift packed correctly so the load is balanced and won't move around?* Unbalanced and/or shifting loads can cause accidents/injury.

3) *Is it easy to grip this load?* Be sure that you have a tight grip on the load before you lift it. Handles applied to the object can assist with the lift.

4) *Is it easy to reach this load?* Get as close to the load as possible doing the work with your legs and your arms, not your back. To avoid lifting over your head, use a ladder. Never arch your back by reaching out for an object.

5) *Do you know and use the best lifting techniques?* Use slow and smooth movements as hurried and jerky movements can lead to muscle strain. Keep your body facing the object while you lift it as twisting can hurt your back. Try to carry all loads close to your body and in the space between your shoulders and your waist. This puts less strain on your back muscles. "Lifting with your legs" should be done only when you can straddle the load. To lift with your legs, bend your knees, not your back, keeping your back in it's natural straight position.

To avoid back injuries do the following:

Warm Up!

Pace yourself! Don't overdo it.

Look around before you lift and as you carry. Make sure you can see where you are walking; know where you will put down the load. Don't rely on a back belt to protect you.

Get help before trying to carry a heavy load! !

### HOLIDAY RIDDLES ANSWERS

- 1) Santa Pause
- 2) You get a hair dryer.
- 3) In a snow bank
- 4) Santa Jaws
- 5) "Holly" wood
- 6) One slays the dragon; the other drags the sleigh!
- 7) Comet stayed home to clean the sink!!

### ON THE LIGHTER SIDE...



"It'll last longer than brick. It's made out of fruitcake."

## 2016 HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS

### Children (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

- Children should never be allowed to go to the car alone and they should never be left alone in the car.
- Teach children their full name, address and telephone number to give to police officers or mall security.
- Teach children to immediately inform you if a stranger is bothering them.

### At Home

- 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. Never post your travel plans on social media.
- Indoor and outdoor lights should be on an automatic timer.
- Leave a radio or television on so the house looks and sounds occupied. These can be set up with a timer also.
- Large displays of holiday gifts should not be visible through the windows and doors of your home.
- When setting up a Christmas tree or other holiday display, make sure doors and passageways are clear inside your home. Leave plenty of room between decorations and heat sources.
- Be sure your Christmas tree is mounted on a sturdy base so children, elderly persons or family pets cannot pull it over on themselves.
- If you use lights on your Christmas tree ensure the wiring is not damaged or frayed. Frayed or damaged wiring can cause a fire. Never string more than three strands of lights together.
- Place your live Christmas tree in water or wet sand to keep it green.
- Never place wrapping paper in your fireplace.
- Never use lighted candles on a tree or near evergreens. Always use non-flammable holders, and place candles where they will not be knocked down.

### Strangers at Your Door

- 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.

### Hosting a Party

- Have non-alcoholic beverages available for party guests.
- Find alternative transportation for intoxicated guests.
- Arrange for an official designated driver for your party who will not drink at all.

### Attending a Party

- Have something to eat before consuming alcoholic beverages.
- Eat high protein foods that will stay in your stomach longer and slow the absorption of alcohol into your system.
- Remember only time will eliminate the alcohol from your body.
- Know your safe limit.
- Never drink and drive.



### QUOTATION OF THE MONTH

"There is nothing like returning to a place that remains unchanged to find the ways in which you yourself have altered."

**Nelson Mandela (1918 - 2013)**