



A Message From the Fire Chief

Have a Fire Safe Holiday Season

During the 2010 holiday season, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) reported that nationally 15, 670 structure fires related to Christmas trees, decorative lighting, and candles. Unfortunately, NFPA also reported that during this same 2010 holiday season, there were 188 deaths recorded and 1,331 fire injuries were associated with improper trees, holiday lighting, and candle care.

Holiday lights and other decorative lighting account in part for a sum of 150 home fires each year. They cause an average of eight civilian deaths, fourteen injuries, and \$ 8.5 million in damages, according to national statistics. Compared to 2010 statistics, the City of Portsmouth is down 16% overall in fires; however, we shall and must remain diligent in our efforts to prevent the next fire from occurring, especially during the holiday season.

To assist in our overall efforts, there is not a more important fire safety tip, than to have a properly functioning smoke alarm in your home or business. A smoke alarm can more than double the chance of you and your love ones surviving a fire. Additionally, the Portsmouth Fire Department will deliver and install, at no cost to you, a free smoke detector; also, while in your home, we will offer you a free Home Safety Survey.

Here are a few Holiday Safety Tips to remember.

- Only use approved UL lighting and decorations.
- DO NOT place your Christmas tree close to a heat source or vent.
- Keep Christmas trees watered and when the tree becomes dry, discard it immediately.
- Inspect holiday lights each year for frayed wire, bare spots, gaps in the insulation broken or cracked sockets and excessive kinking or wear **BEFORE PUTTING THEM UP.**
- Don't overload outlets
- Connect strings or lights to an extension cord before plugging the cord into the outlet.
- Don't leave fireplaces or space heaters unattended.
- **AVOID USING CANDLES.** If you do have to use them, make sure they are in stable holders, away from children, and placed where they cannot be easily knocked over. **NEVER** leave home with a candle still burning!
- Install a smoke alarm on every level of your home. Test the batteries every month and change them at least once a year.

We wish you a Fire Safe Holiday Season.

Please call 393-8689 for your free Smoke Alarm and/or to schedule a free Home Safety Survey.

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Fire Chief

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