

Virginia Cooperative Extension

A partnership of Virginia Tech and Virginia State University



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Safety Tips For the Winter Season

The winter season with all the holiday decorations, closed up homes and cold weather, poses safety hazards that we may have forgotten about since last year. Therefore it is important to review these potential problems again to keep our families and property as safe as possible. Below are just a few of the many things to inspect, correct or prepare for this season. More tips and specific information can be found at <http://www.readyvirginia.gov/stayinformed/winter.cfm>, http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/citizens/all_citizens/home_fire_prev/holiday-seasonal/ or <http://www.dof.virginia.gov/fire/safety-christmas.shtml> .

❖ Fireplaces and Wood Stoves

- Have your chimney and wood stove inspected annually by a certified chimney specialist
- Use only seasoned hardwood because soft, moist wood accelerates dangerous creosote buildup
- Never use flammable liquids to start a fire indoors
- Make sure ashes are extinguished when placed outdoors so to protect your home and property from fires

❖ Holiday Decorations

- Make sure a live tree is kept watered and inspected for dryness, and make sure any type of tree is not near any heat source (fireplace, stove, etc)
- Thoroughly inspect lighted and electric decorations or extension cords and those outlets used for such
- Avoid using lit candles and if used, never leave them unattended

❖ Indoor Heat Sources (space heaters)

- Never use a kerosene or like heater without providing a fresh air intake
- Never use any portable heater within 3 feet of combustibles such as furniture, draperies, decorations, etc

❖ Winter Supplies and Travel

- Keep enough water, non-perishable food, medicines and personal needs on-hand for 3-5 days per person
- Have a battery-powered radio, flashlight and extra batteries on hand
- Make sure your vehicle is winter weather ready and you have blankets or extra winter clothing, along with snacks, along with you on trips

These safety reminders brought to your attention by the Virginia Department of Forestry, Montgomery County Emergency Services Coordinator's Office and Virginia Cooperative Extension, Montgomery County Office.

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