

American Red Cross

10 Ways to Stay Safe This Holiday Season

The holiday season is here, and the American Red Cross wants everyone to stay safe from home fires as they decorate their homes for the upcoming festivities.

Decorations like trees, lights and candles increase the risk of home fires during the holidays—with Christmas, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day being the top three days for home candle fires, according to the National Fire Protection Association.

The Red Cross wants people to stay safe from home fires—the nation's most frequent disaster—by testing their smoke alarms and practicing their home fire escape plan with free resources at [redcross.org/homefires](https://www.redcross.org/homefires). In addition, you can follow these 10 simple safety tips as you put up lights and ornaments:

1. Check all holiday light cords to make sure they aren't frayed or broken. Don't string too many strands of lights together—no more than three per extension cord.
2. If are buying an artificial tree, look for the fire-resistant label. When putting it up, keep it away from fireplaces, radiators and other sources of heat.
3. If getting a live tree, make sure it's fresh and water it to keep it fresh. Bend the needles up and down to make sure no needles fall off.
4. If using older decorations, check their labels. Some older tinsel is lead-based. If using angel hair, wear gloves to avoid irritation. Avoid breathing in artificial snow.
5. When decorating outside, make sure decorations are for outdoor use and fasten lights securely to your home or trees. If using hooks or nails outside, make sure they are insulated to avoid an electrocution or fire hazard.
6. If using a ladder, be extra careful. Make sure to have good, stable placement and wear shoes that allow for good traction.
7. Don't use electric lights on metallic trees.
8. Don't forget to turn off all holiday lights when going to bed or leaving the house.
9. Keep children, pets and decorations away from candles.
10. If hanging stockings on the fireplace mantel, don't light the fireplace.