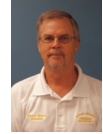




SPECIAL EDITION CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER

Hinds County Department of Emergency Management

Hinds County Board of Supervisors



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<http://www.hindscountyms.com/departments/emergency-management>

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Greetings,

We would like to wish you a Merry Christmas & Happy New Year. We are excited to offer a few tips to keep you safe and secure during this holiday season.

You can help protect yourself from burglars by following the following ideas. Make access to your home difficult. Install deadbolt locks on all exterior doors and use them consistently. Windows should be locked at all times. If you have a pet door put the sliding panel in before you leave home. Some burglars are skinny enough to get in through the flap. Be cautious about letting too many people know when your home will be unoccupied for long periods of time. Thieves like to see unkempt yards, mailboxes overflowing and newspapers left on the front walk. Have somebody come by when you are gone and take care of these things. You can also use light timers to randomly turn lights on and off in the home so it appears to be occupied. Most of all don't share travel plans on social networking sites unless you are sure that your privacy settings won't allow strangers to know you are away from home. Home security systems are always a good idea but if it's not in the budget many companies will provide (usually with a small fee) signs/stickers for the yard/windows indicating that a home has a monitored security system. If a burglar sees them, he is generally going to go elsewhere.

New Years Eve is quickly approaching and we all know there are two things that many people enjoy during this time. Fireworks and alcohol are both extremely dangerous if the people enjoying them do not use wisdom and take safety precautions. If you are going to drink **DO NOT DRIVE!** Always have a designated driver or call a friend/family member to pick you up. Your life is more important than getting behind the wheel of a car and killing yourself or somebody else. There is always another answer!

First and foremost fireworks are **NOT** for young children! Even sparklers burn at temperatures around 2,000 degrees - hot enough to melt some metals. Never place any part of your body over fireworks when lighting and back up a safe distance immediately after lighting the fireworks. Do not attempt to re-light or pick up one that did not fully ignite. Light fireworks one at a time and never point or throw them at another person. Do not carry them in a pocket or shoot them from a metal or glass container. Keep a bucket of water or a hose on hand in case of fire or other accidents. After the fireworks have stopped burning, douse the spent device with plenty of water.

We hope that as you enjoy the holidays with your family and friends that you will heed our advice for the safety of your loved ones and your homes. One more thing before we go, during this festive time enjoy the things you have to be thankful for, take nice long naps, eat lots of amazing food and then go walk around the block because everybody knows after the new years it is all about getting healthy!

Merry Christmas,

The Staff at the Hinds County EOC



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Christmas Tree Safety



As you deck the halls this holiday season, be fire smart. A small fire that spreads to a Christmas tree can grow large very quickly.

Each year, fire departments respond to an average of 210 structure fires caused by Christmas trees. Carefully decorating Christmas trees can help make your holidays safer.

Picking the tree

- If you have an artificial tree, be sure it is labeled, certified, or identified by the manufacturer as fire retardant.

Choose a tree with fresh, green needles that do not fall off when touched.

Placing the tree

- Before placing the tree in the stand, cut 1" - 2" from the base of the trunk.
- Make sure the tree is at least three feet away from any heat source, like fireplaces, radiators, candles, heat vents or lights.
- Make sure the tree is not blocking an exit.

Add water to the tree stand. Be sure to add water daily.

Lighting the tree

- Use lights that have the label of an independent testing laboratory. Some lights are only for indoor or outdoor use, but not both.
- Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Connect no more than three strands of mini string sets and a maximum of 50 bulbs for screw-in bulbs. Read manufacturer's instructions for number of LED strands to connect.
- Never use lit candles to decorate the tree.

Always turn off Christmas tree lights before leaving home or going to bed.

After Christmas

Get rid of the tree when it begins dropping needles. Dried-out trees are a fire danger and should not be left in the home or garage, or placed outside against the home. Check with your local community to find a recycling program. Bring outdoor electrical lights inside after the holidays to prevent hazards and make them last longer.



FACTS

- ! Each year, fire departments respond to roughly 200 structure fires caused by Christmas trees.
- ! Two out of five home Christmas tree fires are caused by electrical problems.
- ! A heat source too close to the tree causes one quarter of the fires.

Source: <http://www.nfpa.org/safety-information/for-consumers/holidays/christmas-tree-fires/christmas-tree-safety-tips>

