

Holiday Safety Tips—Enjoy a Safe Holiday Season

Holiday safety is an issue that burns brightest from late November to mid-January, when families gather, parties are scheduled and travel spikes. Take some basic precautions to ensure your family remains safe and injury-free throughout the season.

Traveling for the Holidays? Be Prepared

Many people choose to travel during the holidays by automobile, with the highest fatality rate of any major form of transportation with alcohol-impaired fatalities representing about one-third of all fatalities.

- Use a designated driver to ensure guests make it home safely after a holiday party; alcohol, over-the-counter or illegal drugs all cause impairment.
- Make sure every person in the vehicle is properly buckled up no matter how long or short the distance traveled.
- Put cell phones away; many distractions can occur while driving, but cell phones are the main culprit.
- Properly maintain the vehicle and keep an emergency kit with you.
- Be prepared for heavy traffic, and possibly heavy snow

Make sure paths are clear so no one trips on wrapping paper, decorations, toys, etc. The National Safety Council provides tips for older adults on slip, trip and fall protection

It's Better to Give Safely

- Select gifts for older adults that are not heavy or awkward to handle.
- Be aware of dangers associated with coin lithium batteries; of particular concern is the ingestion of button batteries
- See which toys have been recalled

Watch Out for Those Fire-starters

- Never leave burning candles unattended or sleep in a room with a lit candle
- Keep candles out of reach of children
- Make sure candles are on stable surfaces
- Don't burn candles near trees, curtains or any other flammable items
- Don't burn trees, wreaths or wrapping paper in the fireplace
- Check and clean the chimney and fireplace area at least once a year

Don't Give the Gift of Food Poisoning

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services provides some holiday food safety

tips. Here are a few:

- Do not rinse raw meat and poultry before cooking
- Use a food thermometer to make sure meat is cooked to a safe temperature
- Refrigerate food within two hours
- Thanksgiving leftovers are safe for four days in the refrigerator
- Bring sauces, soups and gravies to a rolling boil when reheating
- When storing turkey, cut the leftovers in small pieces so they will chill quickly
- Wash your hands frequently when handling food

Provided by the National Safety Council