

## Stay Safe at Home this Christmas

Christmas is a joyous time of the year where family and friends catch up and spend time together. Safety in the home at this time of year may not be to the forefront of people's minds when they are trying to relax and enjoy themselves but it is important to address it as the festive season means a lot of activity that is out of the norm indoors, so here are a few well intended reminders.

**Christmas Trees** - Use a sturdy base to display real Christmas trees and ensure to add water to the base if possible to prevent your tree from drying out and increasing the risk of becoming a fire hazard.

After the Christmas season is over it is not advisable to burn the tree in a traditional fire as it can cause a lot of sparks. If you purchase an artificial tree, be sure to check the flame resistance information on the packaging. Place the tree away from any flammable sources such as the fire, electric heaters or candles.

**Christmas Lights** - Only buy Christmas lights marked with a reputable safety standard and remember not to overload electric sockets. Unplug all lights and other electrical appliances before going to bed at night or when leaving the house.

Only use outdoor lighting that is marked as suitable for exterior use. Use only exterior extension leads and fasten all leads securely to prevent damage if bad weather occurs. Moisture build up can cause issues too so place connections in a covered place or manually cover them.

**Candles** - Candles are a simple way to make your home look festive but they need to be looked after responsibly. Keep them well out of reach of children and pets on an appropriate candleholder placed on a stable, heat-resistant surface. Keep the candle wax pool free of wick trimmings, matches and debris as these can build up. Extinguish the flame if it comes too close to the holder or container and remember to place lighted candles at least 75mm apart. Never place a candle on top of a TV set and keep well away from curtains. Always extinguish unattended candles; before leaving the house or going to bed.

**Fire Safety** - Every home should have a smoke alarm but even if your home has one, it should be checked regularly and especially at Christmas with the increased risks. Avoid burning used wrapping paper in the fireplace as once crumpled up it can expand again quite quickly and be in danger of falling out of the fire. Strings with Christmas card displays look pretty but can be a danger if hung close to candles or fires as they also fall easily. As food and cooking are so important at Christmas, be sure to clean your oven thoroughly as the build-up of fat and deposits can ignite - especially with so much use over the festive season. Christmas should be a happy time for spending time with your family; attending to these details will help to ensure that this Christmas is safe for one and all.

