

# Florence Energy News

## HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS

Each year, hospital emergency rooms treat about 12,800 people for falls, cuts, shocks, and burns due to incidents involving faulty holiday lights, dried out Christmas trees, and other holiday decorations.



Christmas trees are involved in about 300 fires annually, resulting in an average of 10 deaths, 40 injuries, and about \$7 million in property damage and loss. In addition, there are more than 15,000 candle-related fires each year, which result in 140 deaths and \$307 million in property loss.

## TREES AND DECORATIONS

- When purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label "Fire Resistant." Although this label does not mean the tree will not catch fire, it does indicate the tree is more resistant to burning.
- When purchasing a live tree, check for freshness. A fresh tree is green, needles are hard to pull from branches and do not break when bent between your fingers. The bottom of a fresh tree is sticky with resin, and when tapped on the ground, the tree should not lose many needles.
- When setting up a tree at home, place it away from fireplaces and radiators. Because heated rooms dry live trees out rapidly, be sure to keep the stand filled with water. Place the tree out of the way of traffic, and do not block doorways.
- Use only non-combustible or flame-resistant materials to trim a tree. Choose

tinsel or artificial icicles of plastic or nonleaded metals. Leaded materials are hazardous if ingested by children.

- In homes with small children, take special care to avoid sharp or breakable decorations, keeping trimmings that resemble removable parts out of the reach of children who could swallow or inhale small pieces, and avoid trimmings that resemble candy or food that may tempt a child to eat them.
- To avoid eye and skin irritation, wear gloves when decorating with spun glass "angel hair."
- To avoid lung irritation, follow container directions carefully while decorating with artificial snow sprays.

## LIGHTS

- Indoors or outside, use only lights that have been tested for safety by a nationally-recognized testing laboratory, such as UL or ETL/ITSNA. Use only newer lights that have thicker wiring and are required to have safety fuses to prevent the wires from overheating.
- Check each set of lights, new or old, for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections. Throw out damaged sets.
- If using an extension cord, make sure it is rated for the intended use.
- Never use electric lights on a metallic tree. The tree can become charged with electricity from faulty lights, and a person

touching a branch could be electrocuted.

- When using lights outdoors, check labels to be sure they have been certified for outdoor use and plug them in only ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protected receptacles.
- Turn off all holiday lights when you go to bed or leave the house. The lights could short out and start a fire.

## CANDLES

- Keep burning candles within sight.
- Keep burning candles away from items that can burn easily.
- Always use non-flammable holders and keep away from children and pets.
- Keep lighted candles away from trees, other evergreens, and decorations.
- Extinguish all candles before you go to bed or leave the house.



## FIREPLACES

- Use care with "fire salts," which produce colored flames when thrown on wood fires. They contain heavy metals that, if eaten, can cause intense gastrointestinal irritation and vomiting. Keep them away from children.
- Do not burn wrapping papers in the fireplace. Wrappings can ignite suddenly and burn intensely, resulting in a flash fire.
- Place a screen around your fireplace to prevent sparks from igniting nearby flammable materials.



*Information provided by the  
U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission*



## NATURAL GAS SAFETY

Natural gas is colorless and invisible. When it burns, it should appear as a clear, blue flame. Because natural gas has no odor, a special chemical called mercaptan is added to make it easy to detect gas leaks from pipes or appliances. This odor is commonly described as a rotten egg smell.

Natural gas is clean-burning. When burned completely, it produces only water vapor and carbon dioxide just as you do when you breathe. Natural gas is such a safe and dependable fuel that it is easy to take for granted. However, please, never take safety for granted. As with any source of energy, you should follow certain safety measures when using natural gas. If you smell gas, leave the premises and call the Florence Gas Department at 760-6490 or after hours at 764-4456.

While waiting for our field service representative, please:

- Do not try to locate the gas leak.
- Keep everyone away from the area of the odor.
- Open doors and windows if you can do so quickly and easily.
- Do not turn lights on or off or unplug electrical appliances.
- Do not smoke or strike any matches.
- Do not use a telephone or any electrical equipment that might create a spark in the area of the odor.
- Stay away from the house or location in question until it is declared safe to return by a Florence Gas field service representative.

ENJOY THE ADVANTAGES OF NATURAL GAS...  
USE IT SAFELY!

## Energy Saving Tips

1. Use ceiling fans in the winter to distribute heat around a room.
2. Close off unused rooms to conserve heat within your house.
3. Keep vents and chimneys clean and in good working order.
4. Insulate your water heater.
5. Prevent heat loss with storm windows and doors.
6. Clean or replace furnace filters regularly and have the entire system checked annually by a professional.
7. On sunny days, open draperies and blinds to let the sun's warmth into your home.

## ATTENTION

FLORENCE UTILITIES WILL BE CLOSED

THE FOLLOWING HOLIDAYS

DECEMBER 24-25    CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS  
JANUARY 1        NEW YEAR'S DAY

# Florence ENERGY

NEWS YOU CAN USE FROM FLORENCE UTILITIES

Thousands of home owners in Florence chose natural gas to heat, cook, and warm their homes. Natural gas is a safe and dependable source of energy; however, certain safety measures should be followed while using natural gas. Check out the natural gas safety tips so that you will know what to do in case a leak is suspected.

This winter, to help keep warm without raising costs, heat loss prevention and energy saving tips are listed on the back. Check out this article and start conserving energy today.

Many people decorate their homes for the holidays. Each year, hospital emergency rooms treat about 12,800 people for falls, cuts, shocks, and burns due to incidents involving faulty holiday lights, dried out Christmas trees, and other holiday decorations. Several holiday safety tips are listed inside for your review. From all of us at Florence Utilities, may you have safe, warm, and happy holidays.

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS!**

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