

**SALTIRE**  
SAFETY



**Christmas Safety**

# Christmas Safety Tips

Even though we all love Christmas, it can be a dangerous time of year. During the Christmas season, nearly 80,000 people visit A&E due to injuries such as falls, cuts, and burns, according to the NHS. We spend more time in the kitchen, outside in the cold, and rushing around. That is why it is critical for us to be aware of potential hazards during the holiday season. Continue reading to learn about potential Christmas hazards and how to avoid them.

## The Christmas tree

We all love Christmas trees, both real and artificial ones! But unfortunately they are big causes of house fires. So you need to make sure to care for your tree properly. If your tree is real:

- ❖ Pick a tree with a deep green colour.
- ❖ Check the trunk is sticky, not dry.
- ❖ Check the pine needles don't fall off with just a touch.
- ❖ The tree doesn't obstruct any exits.
- ❖ Make sure that there's no naked flames near your tree.

## Decorations

It's important to get your decorations up safely and securely. There are some safety measures you can take to ensure that your Christmas decorations are in good working order this year.

- ❖ Use a sturdy ladder when putting up decorations that are above your height, and wear good footwear whilst doing so.
- ❖ Enlist a partner or friend to keep the ladder sturdy, and to help put up long decorations.
- ❖ Be aware that paper, cardboard and tissue decorations could burn easily.
- ❖ Don't place them near heat sources or heat emitting lights.

## Spills and slips

Christmas really can get stressful. With so many people out and about, we feel the need to rush everywhere. So whether you're at home, at the shops or at a party, the chance for spilt liquid is high. Try and take it slow when walking around with liquids this Christmas time. If you're carrying hot liquids, make sure they've either got a lid on or that you're not

surrounded by people. Although it's a lot of fun getting merry, having to go to A&E might put a damper on things.

### **Alcohol safety**

At Christmas, the idea is to have a good time. But since many of us prefer to do this while drinking, it's wise to monitor your intake. Use a few of these suggestions to control your holiday alcohol intake.

- ❖ Always have a good sized meal before you plan on drinking, don't drink on an empty stomach.
- ❖ Try and not drink more than 14 units a week.
- ❖ Avoid binge drinking.
- ❖ Allocate some 'drink-free' days prior to when you know you will be drinking.

### **Christmas cooking safety**

We spend a lot of time in the kitchen cooking at Christmas, which means there are more chances for hazards to arise. Encourage guests to stay out of the kitchen, or at least away from the chef, when cooking is in full swing. That way there's less distractions and less chance of harm.

Be aware of your surroundings when using the hob, ovens, hot water and knives. Make sure to keep alcohol to a minimum if you're cooking, and have oven gloves to hand for when you're moving hot plates.

### **Sweets & treats (pets)**

There's plenty of sweets to go around at Xmas. Hard boiled sweets, chocolates, toffees, everyone's got a favourite! Although they may be tasty to you, to your pets they could be poisonous. Make sure to get clued up on what ingredients can cause harm to your furry friends. Here are some of the well known poisonous ingredients to cats and dogs:

- ❖ Onions and garlic (both raw and cooked)
- ❖ Chocolate
- ❖ Alcohol
- ❖ Grapes and raisins

### **Christmas food safety**

We eat a lot of food at Christmas. Turkey, roast potatoes, pork trimmings, pigs in blankets, cheese, mince pies. There's lots of it, so you need to be aware of the dangers of food poisoning. One of the main food hazards is the turkey, so make sure to:

- ❖ Defrost your turkey thoroughly.
- ❖ Don't wash the raw turkey.

- ❖ Cook your turkey thoroughly.
- ❖ Cool, refrigerate and re-heat your turkey safely.

### **Winter weather**

It gets icy this time of year. Rain, snow, hail are all forces of nature to be contended with. It gets even more dangerous outside, whether you're in a car or on the street, so make sure to take these precautions to keep yourself safe:

- ❖ Have an emergency first aid kit (including water and blankets) in your car.
- ❖ Wrap up warm with insulated layers and wear appropriate shoes.
- ❖ Stay hydrated and if you're outside all day, take regular breaks.
- ❖ Slow down when you're driving.

### **Shopping safety**

This may not be the first thing you think about at Christmas, but our shopping habits change a lot at this time of year. Whether it's online or in-store, there's a lot of places for harm when shopping.

If you're shopping on the high-street, make sure:

- ❖ You don't buy more than you can carry. You could fall or strain something.
- ❖ You don't leave items visible in your car. Put them in the boot, or take them straight home.
- ❖ You don't get your wallet or purse out before being prompted.
- ❖ If you're shopping online, make sure:
  - ❖ You are wary of "bargains" that don't seem too good to be true.
  - ❖ You update your security software and delete any unprompted requests for personal information.
  - ❖ You use secure websites for purchases, and save all receipts.

### **Check your electrical items**

Lights are the main attraction at Christmas, lovely twinkly fairy lights are absolutely everywhere! But they can be a fire hazard, even if you've used them year after year and never had a problem. With your Christmas lights, please check these things whilst decorating:

- ❖ Visually check your lights thoroughly for any breakages or bare wires.
- ❖ Don't leave them on overnight, they can overheat and cause a fire.
- ❖ Don't overload your sockets!

## Choke hazards

Small toys and decorations are big potential problems for your toddlers (and pets) during the festive season. Make sure to keep decorations at least three feet above reaching height of your children, as well as double checking the age range for the toys you buy them. Although it's difficult to be in two places at once, do your best to supervise them at Christmas, especially whilst they're opening their presents or playing with their new toys.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR**

