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Christmas Day and Christmas Eve are among the leading days of the year for U.S. home fires

Christmas trees, holiday decorations, cooking and baking all contribute to an annual increase in U.S. home fires during the winter months. In fact, Christmas Day and Christmas Eve are among the leading days of the year for home fires (topped only by Thanksgiving Day).

The NFPA [Winter Holidays](#) page offers a wide variety of tips and resources to reduce the risk of fires, while the latest NFPA statistics underscore the increased risk of fire during the holiday season:

Christmas trees

- An estimated average of 160 home fires that began when Christmas trees caught fire caused an average of two civilian deaths, 12 civilian injuries, and \$10 million in direct property damage per year between 2015 and 2019.
- Some type of electrical distribution or lighting equipment, including decorative lights, was involved in almost half of these fires. Nearly one in five Christmas tree fires were started by decorative lights.
- Eight percent of Christmas tree fires were started by candles.
- In nearly one-fifth of Christmas tree fires, the tree was too close to a heat source, such as candle or heating or lighting equipment.

Decorations

- An estimated average of 790 home fires that began when decorations (other than Christmas trees) caught fire caused an average of one civilian death, 26 civilian injuries and \$13 million in direct property damage per year between 2015 and 2019.
- One in five home decoration fires occurred in December.
- Year-round, 35 percent of home decoration fires began with candles; in December, the number jumped to 45 percent.
- In more than two of every five fires (44 percent) involving decorations, the decoration was too close to a heat source such as a candle, cooking or heating equipment.

Candles

- An estimated average of 7,400 home fires (2 percent) started by candles caused an average of 90 civilian deaths (three percent), 670 civilian injuries (6 percent), and \$291 million (4 percent) in direct property damage per year between 2015 and 2019.
- Candle fires peak in December and January with 11 percent of candle fires in each of these months.
- In three of every five candle fires, the candle was too close to something that could catch fire.
- Christmas is the peak day for candle fires with roughly 2.5 times the daily average; Christmas Eve ranked second.
- Falling asleep was a factor in 10 percent of the home candle fires and 12 percent of the associated deaths.

Cooking

- Cooking is the leading cause of reported home fires (49 percent) and home fire injuries and the second-leading cause of home fire deaths.
- Unattended cooking is the leading cause of home cooking fires.
- Thanksgiving is the peak day for home cooking fires, followed by Christmas Day and Christmas Eve.

Fortunately, a little added awareness and some basic safety precautions can greatly help reduce the risk of fire. Make sure to take full advantage of our resources to help better educate and protect your communities this holiday season. They're free, easy to download, reprint, and/or share online.

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