

# MSU-ES Dawg Tracks



December, 2009

Christmas Holiday Safety Tips



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The harvest is complete. The year is almost gone. Where did it go? Christmas is almost upon us again and 2010 is coming soon! With that in mind, we need to refurbish our Christmas spirit with a review or refresher on how to be safe so that everyone involved can enjoy another celebration of Christ's birth – and not just the partying, family celebrations, and all the festivities that go along with the season.

Following are some tips that shall help us enjoy the items mentioned if we heed and pass them on to family and friends:

- **Beware of Holiday Candles –**
  - ~Keep candles away from decorations and other combustible materials.
  - ~Do not leave children unattended in the room with lit candles.
  - ~Keep candles, matches, and lighters out of the reach of children.
  - ~Refrain from using candles to decorate Christmas trees.
  - ~Avoid using candles at parties.
  - ~Never display lighted candles in windows.
- **Test Tree Trimmings –**
  - ~When decorating with lights be sure to purchase the type that have been tested and labeled by an approved laboratory.
  - ~For outside decorations – use only lights that are labeled for outside use.
  - ~Do not overload electrical outlets and always unplug all lights when leaving the home or going to bed.
  - ~Never use electric lights on a metal Christmas tree.
- **Keep Christmas Trees Fresh –**
  - ~Choose a fresh tree and secure it in a sturdy stand.
  - ~Locate the tree away from heat sources and exits – water it daily.
  - ~If you purchase an artificial tree, make sure that it is fire retardant.
- **Prepare for Holiday Parties –**
  - ~Decorate with flame retardant or non-combustible materials.
  - ~Avid using candles at parties.
  - ~If smoking is allowed, furnish sufficient deep dish ash trays and check them frequently.
  - ~After the party, be sure to check the upholstery furniture, cushions and trash cans for smoldering cigarette butts.
- **Designate a Driver –**
  - ~If you are a party attendant, select a driver.
  - ~If you are a host you should have a supply of non-alcoholic beverages on hand for the designated drivers.
- **Inspect Fireplaces –**
  - ~Fireplaces should be cleaned and inspected each year before the start of the heating season. Creosote forms as the wood burns, creating a buildup in the chimney walls that will cause a fire if not properly cleaned.
  - ~Always protect your home and your family by using a sturdy screen when burning fires.
  - ~You should only burn wood and not paper or pine limbs which can float out of the chimney and may ignite a neighbor's yard.
  - ~Never use flammable liquids in a fireplace.
  - ~If you purchase a factory built fireplace, do so by buying one that has a testing laboratory label and make sure that it is installed according to local standards.
  - ~If stockings are hung on the mantle, don't start a fire in the fireplace.
- **Be Cautious With Portable and Space Heaters –**
  - ~Be sure that your wood or coal burning stove has an approved label on it from a reputable testing laboratory.
  - ~Follow the manufacturer's instructions for proper maintenance and use.
  - ~Locate your wood heater at least one meter (three feet) away from any combustibles including wallpaper, bedding, pets and people.
  - ~Never leave space heaters unattended or leave children in the room where space heaters are in use.
  - ~Never dry garments or gloves by laying them on the heaters.
  - ~Be sure to have a floor pad underneath the space heaters to protect the floors.
- **Holiday Shopping safety –**
  - ~When it is at all possible, do your shopping in the broad daylight.
  - ~Avoid wearing expensive jewelry.
  - ~Refrain from carrying a purse or wallet and if so, avoid carrying large amounts of cash... Use plastic for debit or credit purchases. These are prime targets for criminals in crowded shopping areas, transportation terminals, bus stops and other means of rapid transit.
  - ~Park in well-lit and heavily traveled areas when shopping.
  - ~When shopping, especially at night, it is good to have a shopping buddy or partner with you.
  - ~When you return to your vehicle, check closely to see that there are no strangers lurking near.