

*Customize this holiday safety article for use in company/neighborhood newsletters, weekly community newspapers, on your website, and anywhere else that holiday safety content is appropriate.*

## **Invite Safety Home for the Holidays**

*With tips from **[Insert Company Name]** and the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI)*

The winter holiday season is traditionally a festive and eventful time of year, filled with celebrations, family gatherings, and visits from houseguests. In fact, results from a national survey conducted by ESFI indicate that nearly sixty percent of Americans typically host guests in their homes during the holidays.

It's easy to get caught up in the hectic pace of holiday entertaining – cookies to bake, decorations to hang, presents to wrap – but ESFI and **[Insert Company Name]** urge you not to overlook safety during the holiday rush. The winter holiday period is, unfortunately, also a peak time of year for home fires and preventable injuries.

The good news is that it's not difficult to make sure your home is ready to host all of your favorite holiday activities.

First, take time out from your party preparations to test your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms and to make sure your home is protected by an adequate number of alarms. Both smoke and carbon monoxide alarms should be installed on every level of your home and outside each sleeping area. Additional smoke alarms should be installed inside each bedroom. Be sure to share your family fire escape plan with any overnight guests or babysitters.

Arrange your holiday displays so as to avoid overloading electrical outlets with too many decorations or devices. Inspect all decorations, cords and outlets for damage before use. Keep electrical cords out of doorways and high traffic areas where they pose a tripping hazard. Do not pinch cords or affix them to walls, ceilings, or floors with staples or nails, which can damage the insulation.

Keep young visitors safe by preparing your home before they arrive. If your home is not already "childproof," install Tamper Resistant Receptacles (TRRs) or use safety covers on all unused electrical outlets, including those on extension cords and power strips. Store breakables, candles, matches, and other potentially dangerous items in inaccessible or locked areas safe from curious little ones. Don't forget to put away small items, like buttons, coins, and jewelry, which could pose a choking hazard. Use safety gates at the top and bottom of stairways to keep babies and toddlers safe.

Safety doesn't stop when the party gets started. Adopt a proactive approach to safety during your holiday festivities as well. Keep decorations, gifts, and other combustibles at least three feet from heat sources or open flame. Never leave the kitchen when something is cooking. Make sure children are supervised at all times in the kitchen and in rooms where heat sources or open flame are in use. Turn off and unplug all decorations before leaving home or turning in for the night.

Remember that a safe and happy holiday is by far the best gift you can give your friends and family this year. Happy Holidays from **[Insert Company Name]**!