

Don't Let Fire Ruin Festive Cheer this Christmas

Christmas dinner, wrapping presents, decorating your home – there's lots to think about this Christmas.

While fire safety is important throughout the year, the extra distractions of Christmas make it especially important to be vigilant during the festive season and North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service would like residents to put Fire Safety on their Christmas lists this year and take extra care to ensure that their families and loved ones are protected from fire.

Fire statistics show that in December, 20 people a day are either killed or injured in accidental fires in the home in England and in December 2013, there were around 2,700 accidental fires – more than any other month of the year.

Here are some simple tips from Fire Kills to help you and your family enjoy the joys Christmas safely:

- **Ensure you have working smoke alarms installed on all levels of your home.** A working alarm can give you the vital time needed to escape in a fire. Test your smoke alarms regularly and never remove batteries! Do something good this Christmas, **test the smoke alarms of someone you know who may need help such as an older relative or neighbour** to ensure their safety too.
- **Never leave cooking unattended.** The majority of fires start in the kitchen so this is a high risk area. Many of us enjoy a merry tippie over the festive season but be sure to avoid cooking whilst under the influence of alcohol. Always turn off kitchen appliances when you have finished cooking.
- **Never leave burning candles unattended.** Keep candles out of the reach of children, and away from decorations, cards and wrapping paper, fires, lights and heaters.
- **Put your cigarette out, right out.** Make sure your cigarette is fully extinguished and take care when under the influence of alcohol or tired. It's very easy to fall asleep while your cigarette is still burning and set furniture alight.
- **Don't overload sockets.** Ensure only one plug per socket. Always turn off plugs when they are not in use, except those that are designed to be left on, like freezers.
- **Ensure you switch off fairy lights** and unplug them before you go to bed, or leave the house. Check your Christmas tree lights conform to the British Standard (BS EN 60598) and are in good working order before use. This video shows how fast a Christmas Tree fire develops <http://youtu.be/hMtjGfr0tYs>
- **Always use an RCD (residual current device)** on outdoor electrical equipment. This safety device can save lives by instantly switching off the power if there is a fault and can be found in any DIY store.
- Make sure that everyone in your home, including visitors, knows what to do in a fire – **in the event of fire you should get out, stay out and call 999**

North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue offer free home fire risk checks, providing advice, checking existing smoke alarms, and in certain cases may be able to supply and fit new smoke alarms for free. To book an appointment visit <http://www.northyorksfire.gov.uk/communitysafety/fire-safety-visit> or call 01609 788545.

North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service wish you all a very happy and safe Christmas.