



Holiday Safety Blast!



Holiday Residential Decorating "DO's" & "DON'Ts"

—Marilyn Croci
QUALITY ASSURANCE MANAGER
ARIZONA TRAINING PROGRAM AT COOLIDGE

As we prepare for and celebrate the Holidays, it is important to make sure that we are aware of everyone's safety when decorating. Here are some "DO's" & "DON'Ts" to remember:



DECORATION "DO's"

- **DO** use noncombustible or flame-resistant materials to decorate trees.
- **DO** follow artificial snow directions on the can to avoid lung irritation.
- **DO** avoid using small decorations or those with removable parts around small children and individuals with pica behaviors.

DECORATION "DON'Ts"

- **DON'T** block exits, exit paths or high traffic areas with decorations.
- **DON'T** place electrical cords in traffic areas which can cause trips/falls.
- **DON'T** hang decorations from sprinkler system heads or piping.
- **DON'T** hang decorations from ceiling that would hinder/block sprinkler spray patterns.

HOLIDAY TREE "DO's"

- **DO** only use artificial trees with "Fire Resistant" labels.
- **DO** check for freshness of live trees. *Needles don't fall off tree or break.*
- **DO** keep live trees well-watered (check daily).
- **DO** dispose of live trees at sites designated by your city/township.

HOLIDAY TREE "DON'Ts"

- **DON'T** place trees by a heat source.
- **DON'T** block exits, exit paths or high traffic areas with trees.
- **DON'T** leave a live tree in the garage, carport, or against the side of a building when removing from the setting.

HOLIDAY INDOOR & OUTDOOR LIGHTS "DO's"

- **DO** only use UL (Underwriter's Laboratory) approved lights.
- **DO** make certain lights used outdoors are rated for such use.
- **DO** use LED lights, if possible, for less heat & less chance of fire.
- **DO** discard any damaged sets of lights: check for unprotected or frayed/exposed wiring, loose connections & broken sockets, etc.
- **DO** use only electric or battery operated candles.
- **DO** turn off all lights when everyone goes to sleep or leaves the setting.

HOLIDAY INDOOR & OUTDOOR LIGHTS "DON'Ts"

- **DON'T** exceed the number of light strands recommended by the manufacturer.
- **DON'T** use any type of burning candles: candlesticks, jar candles, votives, tea lights, etc. (NO OPEN FLAMES!)

Holiday Shopping Safety

—Pauline Selmer
DISTRICT SOUTH QUALITY ASSURANCE MANAGER

The Holiday Season finds us in the midst of the biggest shopping days of the year! Many of the individuals we serve also enjoy opportunities for Holiday shopping. Their safety, as well as ours, is of primary importance!

The mere thought of "shopping" most likely elevates one's excitement! Keep the following brief safety reminders in mind:



PRE-PLANNING: Staff should review every detail of the trip with regard to appropriate supervision, meeting places, security, individuals' special needs, and emergency contact information.

TRANSPORTATION: Ensure that vehicles are safe and working properly. Refer to the agency's maintenance checklist for any additional functioning requirements and safety equipment. Always walk around the vehicle before departing from any location to make certain no one has been overlooked while boarding.

INDIVIDUAL SAFETY: Review your agency's safety protocol for events and activities. During the Holidays, crowded parking lots, malls, and shopping centers can be especially challenging! To ensure safety, keep the following in mind:

- **Never** leave people unattended.
- **Never** let individuals wander off without staff supervision.
- Upon arrival, make certain no one is left in the vehicle.
- Watch for moving traffic.
- Many of the individuals we serve lack "stranger-danger" skills.

Remember that predators and thieves look for easy targets, especially during the Holidays when you are distracted. Stay alert, be safe!

Holiday Excitement & Stressors

—Iris-Marie Norvor
PROGRAM MONITORING · QUALITY ASSURANCE UNIT

The excitement of the Holiday season can be depressing and lonely for individuals as some of them may miss family and Holiday traditions. In addition, some individuals may be disheartened when their housemates spend time with their families. This can lead to an increase in behaviors and greater anxiety.

Here are some suggestions to consider in making the Holiday Season fun and more meaningful:



Holiday Poison & Choking Risks

—Linda Leary
DISTRICT CENTRAL QUALITY ASSURANCE MANAGER

The Holiday Season's trappings and traditions can bring an unwelcomed visitor: the increased likelihood of accidental poisoning or choking. It is important to be aware of potential **HOLIDAY HAZARDS** and take precautions. No one wants to have their Holidays ruined!

Potential dangers can include decorations of **MISTLETOE**, **HOLLY**, and **POINSETTIAS**. Holly berries and their leaves can cause severe illness if eaten. Poinsettias can irritate the mouth and cause stomach cramps if swallowed.



BATTERIES are another danger! Swallowed batteries can cause choking, intestinal blockages and injuries, or poisoning from leaking contents. The small disc batteries can stick in the esophagus, obstructing it or causing severe burns.

If poisoning occurs, staff should remain calm and immediately call for help. A resource to call is the **Banner Good Samaritan Poison & Drug Information Center Hotline @ 1-800-222-1222**. Call **9-1-1** when in doubt!

Homemade candies, desserts, and hors d'oeuvres also present choking risks. Several of these goodies are presented as bite-sized pieces which pose a choking hazard for all of us. Food items such as nuts, raw vegetables, popcorn, hard or gooey candy, shrimp, sausage, bread, etc., should need to be cut into smaller pieces for individuals identified "at risk" for aspiration or choking. A care-giver should be present at all times to monitor meal or snack times with these individuals.

Everyone enjoys visiting during the holidays. However, it is recommended not to talk or laugh with one's mouth full while eating. Think prevention! Learn how to perform abdominal thrusts and CPR!

Holiday Excitement & Stressors

Continue from Page 1

ACKNOWLEDGE OTHERS' FEELINGS: Have a conversation with individuals you work with or support and find out how they feel about the Holidays. What excites them about this time of the year and what makes them sad? It is OK to feel sad when they miss their families and other friendships that are important to them. They may be excited about an upcoming family visit. Help them to prepare for that visit to make it all the more enjoyable.

PLAN: Organize Holiday activities that include arts and crafts projects, making decorations and gifts, going shopping, decorating their room and the house, getting their hair and nails done, dressing up, and planning a special meal. This is a good time of the year to start some of your own Holiday traditions!



ANXIETY: Individuals may become more anxious during the Holiday season. Good planning will help reduce some of the stressors during this time of the year. It is important to remain positive and nurturing. Going out into the community to various Holiday events can also help reduce stress and anxiety as everyone enjoys the excitement of the Holidays.

Holiday Transportation Safety

—Onelia Soto
DISTRICT NORTH SUPPORT COORDINATION PROGRAM MANAGER FOR THE WEST AREA

The Holidays offer excellent opportunities for a variety of getaways with friends and family. However, winter weather may bring sudden surprises that can ruin your trip! Extreme variations in Arizona's temperatures, rain, snow, ice, and dust do affect road and driving conditions, which can cause serious problems. Over 450,000 injury crashes occur annually in adverse weather conditions or on slick pavement, according to the U.S. Dept. of Transportation. Look ahead and be prepared for possible weather challenges during the Holidays. Before you load your vehicle and hit the road, take time to monitor weather forecasts and prepare your vehicle for winter driving.



Here are a few necessary driving tips to help make your winter trip safe and successful:

CHECK YOUR VEHICLE:

- ignition
- hoses
- fuel, emission & air filters
- brakes
- fan belts
- wiring
- fluid levels
- proper tire inflation
- battery
- antifreeze

Maintain a regular maintenance schedule.

ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES:

- cell phone
- snow brush
- reflective triangles
- working flashlight
- non-perishable foods (energy bars, non-salted nuts, dried fruits, candy)
- compass
- tire chains
- first aid kit
- blankets
- scissors and string/cord
- exterior windshield cleaner
- ice scraper
- bottled water

Be prepared with a "survival kit" that should always remain in the vehicle, and replenish the supplies after use.

DRIVING SAFELY ON ICY OR WET ROADS:

- Decrease your speed & leave plenty of room to stop.
- Brake gently to avoid skidding.
- If your wheels start to lock up, ease off the brake.
- Turn on your lights.
- Use low gears to keep traction.
- Don't use cruise control or overdrive on icy roads.
- Be especially careful on bridges, overpasses, and infrequently traveled roads, which will freeze first.
- Don't pass snow plows and sanding trucks.
- Don't assume your vehicle can handle all conditions.

FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCE INFORMATION:
<https://www.nhtsa.gov> <https://www.weather.com>

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