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## Safety during the holidays

The holidays are upon us! This is the time of year we spend with family and friends, do some shopping, decorate the house, cook meals, and hopefully, relaxing. It's also the time of year where we may shift our focus away from safety. Remember, just because we are taking a break during the Holidays, doesn't mean that safety will. In fact, with all the distractions the Holidays bring, it is more important than ever we maintain our focus on safety. In this month's safety article, we will discuss safety tips when decorating and how to handle stress.

Decorations are a great way to get into the holiday spirit but putting up those decorations may be hazardous. A few tips to remember when decorating:

- Before using a ladder, inspect it for any damage and ensure it is placed on a stable surface. Landscaped areas provide potentially unstable bases.
- When putting up outdoor lights, be sure they are identified for outdoor use. Do not use indoor lights outside.
- Do not use damaged or frayed extension cords. Inspect them for any damage and replace them if necessary.
- When you are using indoor/outdoor lighting, make sure there are no missing or broken bulbs.
- When attaching lights to the house, use clips. Nails or staples may cause damage to the string of lights and be a potential hazard.
- Indoor lights should be kept off the ground and away from high traffic areas to prevent breakage and accidental trips and falls.
- Be sure to turn off lights when leaving the house or going to bed. Most home fires occur during the evening and at night.
- If you decide to use a live Christmas Tree, be sure to keep it watered. A dry tree has a much higher potential to catch fire.

The holidays are meant to be a fun, enjoyable time with family and friends but sometimes stress can be overwhelming during this time. Here are some tips to help relieve some of that stress.

- Plan Ahead – If you are hosting a meal, be sure to plan a menu. Having a predetermined list will make grocery shopping easier.
- Budget for the Season - Create a budget for meals and gifts and stick to it.
- To-Do List – Create a To-Do list to keep you organized. Cross off those items so you feel a sense of accomplishment.
- If family or friends offer to help, take advantage of it. This could be one less thing on your "To-Do" List.
- Maintain Healthy Habits – The holidays are a time to indulge but keep it in moderation. Limit the amount of food and beverages you consume. Exercise is a great way stress reliever and a great way to recharge your batteries.
- Engage in activities that make you feel good: Reading a book, listening to music, taking a walk, or just having a conversation with family or friends.

Remember, don't lose sight of what's important. The Holidays should be an enjoyable time with family and friends and celebrating safely and stress-free is key to a successful Holiday Season. Finally, be sure you take control of the Holidays and don't let the Holidays take control of you.

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