



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 6, 2016

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Fire Chief encourages close attention to fire hazards

SACHSE (December 6, 2016) Even as the local temperature dips into the upper 40s, it's not too late for residents to have a qualified technician review their home's heating system for flaws, cleaning or maintenance.

That's one piece of advice from Sachse Fire Chief Martin "Marty" Wade to combat the possibility of home fires this winter. While home heating equipment accounts for many winter home fires, inattention during holiday cooking is actually the leading cause of these catastrophes.

"Residents often have friends and family over for the holidays and, of course, a meal is prepared," he said. "Distractions, interruptions, lengthy conversations and alcohol can all come into play while the stove or oven is on. Leaving an open flame unattended can lead to tragic results."

Here are some safety tips for the kitchen:

- Make sure the oven and stove top are clean and free of grease and dust. Also, the exhaust hood and duct over the stove should be cleaned regularly.
- Refrigerator coils should be vacuumed every three months to prevent potentially dangerous build up.
- Food being cooked should never be left unattended. Cooking should not be undertaken if sleepy or under the influence of alcohol. Children should also be closely supervised and kept at least three feet away from all cooking appliances.
- Food being cooked can be easily forgotten, especially when entertaining guests. An audible kitchen timer should be used as a reminder of food in the oven or stove top.

"Being proactive about safety will give everyone peace of mind, and allow you to enjoy your time with your guests," said the Chief.

In addition to home heating and cooking, holiday decorations can present fire hazards. Candles left on overnight or while the occupants are away or distracted can be extremely dangerous. Similarly, holiday light strings, especially those on a real tree that is drying or on an artificial tree that is not fire resistant, can cause a blaze.

Chimeneas, fire pits, indoor and outdoor fireplaces should all be closely monitored, and children should be supervised while near these open flames. At the end of the evening or when leaving the home, these open fires should be thoroughly extinguished, and not allowed to burn themselves out. A stray ember is all that is necessary to start a major fire.

"Fires are very often the result of carelessness and inattention," added the Chief. "Being aware of the dangers and ensuring that common sense prevails is an important step in prevent them."

More information on fire safety can be found online at www.nfpa.org, the National Fire Prevention Association web site, among many others.

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