

Keep the Wreath Red

During the preparation for the 2017 Holiday Season, as more and more decorations and lights appear throughout the City of St Pete Beach, one particular decoration holds a very important meaning--the wreaths that decorate Fire Stations 22 and 23. They are lit with red light bulbs at the beginning of the holiday season.

The wreaths are part of the Keep the Wreath Red fire safety campaign, a statewide program that reminds you to practice fire safety during the holiday season.

The wreaths feature decorative red lights, and for each fire caused by holiday decorations, a red bulb is replaced with a white bulb indicating that there has been a holiday-related fire in the City.

It is the goal of the St Pete Beach Fire Rescue to keep all of bulbs red.

The following are some precautions to help make this holiday season a safe one:



Christmas Trees

- 🌲 When displaying a live tree, cut about two inches off the trunk, and then mount it in a sturdy stand. Make sure there is enough room around the trunk so you can fill it with water.
- 🌲 Water, water, water; and don't let the water ever go below the fresh cut base. This will cause the base to seal and the tree to stop absorbing water. Christmas trees are very thirsty and will use up to a gallon of water each day. Check the stand **each day** for water. When your tree stops drinking water—it's time to remove it or discontinue lighting it.
- 🌲 Keep your tree away from heat sources such as fireplaces, portable heater and radiators. The heat will dry out the tree, causing it to be more easily ignited by heat flame or sparks.

Stringing holiday lights

- 🌲 Follow the manufacturer's instructions for connecting multiple strings. The general limit is three strings. Light strings with stacked plugs can usually accommodate greater lengths than end-to-end connections.
- 🌲 Replace burned-out bulbs promptly. Empty sockets can cause the entire string to overheat.

- 🌲 Make sure that the lights and extension cords you are stringing outside are rated for exterior use. Exterior lights, unlike those used inside the house need to be weather-resistant. The same goes for any extension cords used outdoors.
- 🌲 Do not overload extension cords.
- 🌲 Don't use outdoor lights indoors. They're too hot for interior use. For the coolest bulbs and greatest energy efficiency, try LED lights, which come in a wide range of styles and colors.
- 🌲 Don't attach light strings with nails or staples. They can cut through the wire insulation and create a fire hazard. To hold lights in place, string them through plastic hooks
- 🌲 Take exterior lights down within 90 days. The longer they stay up, the more likely they are to suffer damage from weather and critters chewing on them.
- 🌲 Store lights safely. Tangled lights can lead to damaged cords and broken sockets. After the holidays, coil each string loosely around a rigid piece of cardboard, wrap it in paper or fabric to protect the bulbs, and store in a sturdy container until next year.
- 🌲 Do not run cords underneath carpeting or throw rugs.
- 🌲 Always turn off interior holiday lights when leaving or going to sleep. Never leave unattended.

Candles

- 🌲 If you do use lit candles, make sure that they are in stable candle holders that are at least 12 inches away from anything that can burn.
- 🌲 Light candles carefully. Keep your hair and any loose clothing away from the flame.
- 🌲 Don't burn a candle all the way down -- put it out before it gets too close to the holder or container.
- 🌲 Never use a candle if you use oxygen in your home.
- 🌲 Have flashlights and battery-powered lighting ready to use during a power outage. Never use candles.
- 🌲 Blow out all candles when you leave the room or go to bed. Avoid the use of candles in the bedroom and other areas where people may fall asleep.
- 🌲 Never leave a child alone in a room with a burning candle. Keep matches and lighters up high and out of children's reach, preferably in a locked cabinet.
- 🌲 Keep pets away from lit candles.

As always, check your smoke detectors and make sure they are in good working order. If you did not change the batteries when you changed your clocks in November, change them now.

For more information please contact St Pete Beach Fire Prevention Bureau at (727) 363-9207.