



Lakewood Fire District No. 1

733 Cedar Bridge Avenue
Lakewood, NJ 08701

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 22, 2022

Subject: Holiday Fire Safety

Contact: Yehuda Beer, Fire District Administrator 732-364-5151

HOLIDAY FIRE SAFETY TIPS

It's fun to decorate and cook to celebrate the winter holidays, but holiday decorations and unsafe cooking practices can increase your risk for a home fire. Cooking is the main cause of home fires any time of the year but it is especially common during the winter holiday season. The average number of home fires in residential buildings during this season is often double the number of home fires throughout the rest of the year. To assist you in being fire smart this holiday season, the Lakewood Board of Fire Commissioners in conjunction with Fire Chief Jonathan Yahr, and the members of the Lakewood Fire Department remind the community to be mindful of the following hazards to ensure a fire safe Holiday.

- Only use a turkey fryer outdoors. Make sure that it the fryer is on a sturdy surface, away from things that can burn.
- Place Chanukah lamps on sturdy nonflammable surfaces, at least three feet away from flammable materials and in a location where they cannot be knocked over or something can fall on top of them. Do not leave children unattended in a room with lit candles and do not display lighted candles in windows or near exits in case you need these to escape. Never leave a lit Chanukah lamp unattended and keep matches, lighters and lit objects away from children.
- When purchasing a live Christmas tree, check for freshness. A fresh tree is green, needles are hard to pull from branches and when bent between your fingers, needles do not break. The trunk butt of a fresh tree is sticky with resin, and when tapped on the ground, the tree should not lose many needles.
- When setting up a tree at home, place it away from fireplaces and radiators. Since heated rooms dry live trees out rapidly and can catch on fire easily, be sure to keep the stand filled with water. Place the tree out of the way of traffic and do not block doorways.
- Inspect holiday lights each year before you put them up. Throw away light strands with frayed or pinched wires. Do not overload electrical outlets.

- **Cooking** – When cooking, roll up your sleeves and avoid wearing loose fitting clothing that can easily catch fire. Do not reach over burners and other hot surfaces. Keep all flammable items (dishtowels, bags, boxes, curtains, etc.) at least three feet from the range top. Always turn pot handles inward to prevent young children from pulling down a hot pan. Remain in the kitchen and keep an eye on the stove or oven. Unattended cooking remains a leading cause of home fires. If there's an oven fire, keep the door closed. Turn off the oven and keep the door closed until it's cool. Keep a large pan lid or baking sheet handy in case you need to smother a pan fire and keep children and pets away from the stove.
- **Frying** – When frying, it is important to keep children away from the stove and other cooking elements. Use the back burners so they are out of the reach of children. When reheating fried foods, be careful of the oil that is in the food as it reheats, since it can cause severe burns. If you see any smoke, or grease starts to boil, turn the burner off. In the event of a grease fire, smother the flames with a lid only if it is possible. Do not use water to extinguish a grease fire as this will just increase the size of the fire. Do Not Hesitate to Immediately Call 911.
- **Appliances** – Keep all appliances away from the edge of the counter and all wires safely out of reach, especially when children are around. Leave ample space around any appliances to allow air to circulate and minimize the buildup of heat. Please make sure your appliances are U.L. compliant and in optimal condition. An appropriate U.L. approved heavy duty timer may be used with hotplates, crock pots, etc. Speak to your Rav, if you need further *Halachic* clarification on using timers on Shabbos.
- **Heat your home safely.** Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from fireplaces, wood stoves, portable heaters and radiators. When you leave a room or go to bed, turn heaters off or unplug them. Portable generators should NEVER be used indoors and should only be refueled outdoors and in well ventilated areas.
- **Calling the Fire Department on the Holiday or *Shabbos*** – NEVER hesitate to call the fire department even for the slightest suspicion of danger. Fire Department Chaplain Rabbi Moshe Rotberg (with direction from other various local rabbinical authority) would like to remind the community, since it is impossible for the typical layman to determine from the time of the crisis if it poses a danger to one's self or neighbors. One should not hesitate to call the Fire Department immediately. What may appear to the uneducated to be “nothing” may, in fact, be deadly.
- **PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU HAVE WORKING SMOKE ALARMS AND CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS IN YOUR HOME.** At a minimum, smoke alarms should be located outside each separate sleeping area and on every floor of one's home. Place a carbon monoxide detector outside each sleeping area in the home.
- **Be aware of what you will need to do if your clothes are on fire.** Review, the principles of “STOP, DROP and ROLL” which are simple: STOP – do not run if your clothes catch on fire. DROP – to the ground and cover your face. ROLL – continue to roll to smother the fire.

- Think about and remain cognizant of your environment and your surroundings. Always be mindful of what you will do in the event of a fire to escape safely. Identify two exits when you enter an unfamiliar building. The way you entered the building may not be the quickest or safest escape route in an emergency. Do not use elevators in a fire emergency; use the stairs. Look for standard fire protection equipment such as pull stations, fire extinguishers, posted evacuation plans, etc. Follow your instincts – don't stay in a building that has blocked or padlocked exit doors, is overcrowded or has hazardous activity going on that makes you uncomfortable. By conducting this mental pre-planning, you may be better able to act promptly when a fire or alarm of fire occurs. If you don't feel safe, don't stay inside. Report locked or blocked exits and overcrowding issues immediately to fire officials.
- Fire Safety Information for parents, children and educators can be found by visiting the Fire District Website at www.lakewoodfd.org and clicking on Sparky's Firehouse or New Jersey Fire Safety under the Links heading.
- Information regarding smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors for individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing can be obtained by contacting New Jersey Department of Human Services – Division of Deaf and Hard of Hearing at www.nj.gov/humanservices/ddhh/equipment/

The Lakewood Board of Fire Commissioners and the Members of the Lakewood Fire Department wish all a Happy and Safe Holiday Season