



## OFFICE OF THE MAYOR


Sherry L. Capello, Mayor

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### PRESS RELEASE

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TO : All News Media

FROM : Mayor Sherry L. Capello 

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SUBJECT: Prevent Holiday Fires – Keep the Wreath Red this Holiday Season

DATE : November 17, 2022

The City of Lebanon announces the Holiday Fire Safety Campaign referred to as “Keep the Wreath Red”. This program will be used to raise fire safety awareness during the holiday season. Each City of Lebanon Fire Station, the Lebanon Farmer’s Market, Mel’s Diner, City Hall, and 136 South Eighth Street will host a wreath that is wrapped with red lights. The wreaths will remain lit 24 hours a day during the holiday season from November 23 at 6:00 p.m. to New Year’s Day at 6:00 p.m. If a fire occurs during the holiday season, a white bulb will replace a red bulb on the wreath. The hope is the red wreath will serve as a constant reminder to practice fire safety during the holiday season.

Residential fires during the holiday season are more frequent, more costly, and more deadly than at any other time of the year. The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) reports more than double the number of open-flame fires on Christmas Day than on an average day and about twice as many on New Year’s Day. And when those fires occur, they do more damage. Property loss during a holiday fire is 34 percent greater than in an average fire and the number of fatalities per thousand fires is nearly 70 percent higher. When the source of the fire is a highly flammable Christmas tree, the toll in property and lives is even greater.



### **Decorative Lights**

Inspect light strings and throw out any with frayed or cracked wires or broken sockets. When decorating, don't run more than three strings of lights end to end.

“Stacking the plugs is much safer when you're using a large quantity of lights,” explains Brian L. Vogt, Director of Education for holiday lights firm Christmas Décor.' Extension cords should be in good condition and UL-rated for indoor or outdoor use. Check outdoor receptacles to make sure the ground fault interrupters don't trip. If they trip repeatedly, Vogt says, that's a sign that they need to be replaced.

When hanging lights outside, avoid using nails or staples, which can damage the wiring and increase the risk of a fire. Instead, use UL-rated clips or hangers. “ And take lights down within 90 days”, says John Drengenberg, Director of Consumer Safety for Underwriters Laboratories. “If you leave them up all year round, squirrels chew on them and they get damaged by weather”.

### **Kids Playing with Matches**

The number of blazes—and, tragically, the number of deaths—caused by children playing with fire goes up significantly during the holidays. From January through March, 13 percent of fire deaths are the result of children playing with fire, the USFA reports. In December, that percentage doubles. So keep matches and lighters out of kids' reach. “We tend to underestimate the power of these tools”, says Meri-K Appy, President of the non-profit Home Safety Council. “A match or lighter could be more deadly than a loaded gun in the hands of a small child.”

### **Fireplaces**

Soot can harden on chimney walls as flammable creosote, so before the fireplace season begins, have your chimney inspected to see if it needs cleaning. Screen the fireplace to prevent embers from popping out onto the floor or carpet, and never use flammable liquids to start a fire in the fireplace. Only burn seasoned wood—no wrapping paper.

When cleaning out the fireplace put embers in a metal container and set them outside to cool for 24 hours before disposal.

The City of Lebanon welcomes other businesses and residents to participate in the program and display a red wreath during the holiday season. Join us in Keeping the Wreath Red this Holiday Season!