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Turkey, Tinsel and Tinder: Erie Insurance offers tips for hazard-free holidays

ERIE, Pa. (Nov. 18, 2013) - The song says "It's the most wonderful time of the year," but it can also be the most dangerous. The period between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day is fraught with hazards from car crashes to house fires to holiday-related injuries. To help ensure revelers have a safe holiday season, [Erie Insurance](#) is raising awareness of some of the most dangerous holiday hazards and how to avoid them with this [infographic](#).

"Being aware of the biggest risks to you and your loved ones' safety during the holidays can help prevent accidents," said Rick Burt, executive vice president of products at Erie Insurance. "Each holiday hazard we identified is preventable."

Below are some of the most common holiday hazards and how to avoid them.

The hazard	The numbers	Tips
Bonfires and fire pits	National Fire Protection Association reports 692,000 outside and other fires occurred in 2012.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place fire pits at least 10 feet away from your house or other structures. • Keep fire pits away from trees, brush and other flammable materials.
Cooking holiday meals	Three times as many home cooking fires occur on Thanksgiving than any other day of the year according to the National Fire Protection Association . NFPA reports there were 1,370 home cooking fires on Thanksgiving in 2010, a 219 percent increase over the daily average.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep fryers can be hazardous, so always fill turkey fryers with the proper amount of oil. • Never drop a frozen turkey into hot oil as it could cause flare-ups. • Put turkey fryers on a level surface. • Never leave the fryer unattended.
Heart attacks	According to a national study published in the journal Circulation , the number of cardiac deaths is higher on Dec. 25 than on any other day of the year. The study reports Dec. 26 is the second highest, and the third highest is Jan. 1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid exposure to very cold temperatures and dress warmly. • Avoid excess salt and alcohol, which can cause an abnormal heart rhythm that increases the risk of stroke, heart attack and heart failure. • Minimize heart stressors such as overexertion and emotional stress. • Don't let fear of disrupting the holidays lead you to ignore chest pains- seek immediate medical attention.
	According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) , the number of holiday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), the number of holiday decoration-related injuries increased by 1,000 each year from 12,000 in 2009 to 13,000 in 2010 to 14,000 in 2011. • Ensure ladders are on

Holiday decorations	decoration-related injuries increased by 1,000 each year from 12,000 in 2009 to 13,000 in 2010 to 14,000 in 2011.	secure and level ground. • Make sure all decorations are nonflammable or flame-retardant • Keep decorations, including live Christmas trees, away from heat vents. • Never leave a burning candle unattended; better yet, consider using battery operated flameless candles.
Car accidents	Thanksgiving is one of the deadliest times to be on the road, according to MADD . In 2010, 174 people were killed in drunk driving crashes during the holiday weekend, accounting for 40 percent of highway deaths.	• Stay sober or designate a driver. • Always wear your safety belt and place children in properly installed car seats. • Keep your eyes on the road and your hands on the wheel-keep distractions to a minimum. • Properly maintain your car for winter weather.
Sledding accidents	According to a study published in Pediatrics , more than 20,000 children are injured every year in sledding accidents.	• Choose snowy hills rather than icy ones. • Avoid hills that end in streets or parking lots, or near ponds, fences or other obstacles. • Wear a helmet.
Slips and falls	Falls are one of the leading causes of unintentional injuries in the United States, accounting for approximately 8.9 million visits to the emergency department, according to the National Safety Council .	• Wear footwear with low heels and rubber soles for better traction. • Avoid rushing; walk slowly and deliberately. • Keep hands free and out of pockets. • Avoid icy surfaces.

According to A.M. Best Company, Erie Insurance Group, based in Erie, Pennsylvania, is the 14th largest homeowners insurer and 12th largest automobile insurer in the United States based on direct premiums written and the 18th largest property/casualty insurer in the United States based on total lines net premium written. The Group, rated A+ (Superior) by A.M. Best Company, has nearly 4.7 million policies in force and operates in 11 states and the District of Columbia. Erie Insurance Group is a FORTUNE 500 and Barron's 500 company. Erie Insurance is proud to have received the J.D. Power and Associates' award for "[Highest in Customer Satisfaction with the Auto Insurance Purchase Experience](#)" and to be a J.D. Power and Associates' [2012 Customer Service Champion](#). ERIE is one of only 50 U.S. companies so named. Erie Insurance is also recognized on the list of Ward's 50 Group of top performing insurance companies, which analyzes the financial performance of 3,000 property and casualty companies and recognizes the top performers for achieving outstanding results in safety, consistency and financial performance over a five-year period (2008-2012).

News releases and more information about Erie Insurance Group are available at www.erieinsurance.com.

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