

## THE CATHOLIC MUTUAL CONNECTION

### And To All, a Safe Night!

'Tis the season when our Church buildings are filled with light and life as we prepare for and celebrate Christmas.

While many parishes have their beloved decorating traditions, it is important to ensure that trees, lights and candles don't present safety hazards. The National Fire Protection Association has a code against live trees, wreaths and garland in many non-residential places, including schools and churches, and we recommend adhering to that standard - even if local code regulations don't prohibit live trees. Here are other safety recommendations to keep in mind:

- Artificial trees should contain the label of a nationally recognized testing laboratory indicating that they are fire-retardant. Metallic trees can be used, however only indirect lighting should be used on these types of trees as they could become electrically charged if the edges of the metal come in contact with an exposed wire from a string of lights.
- All trees should be properly secured to prevent the chance of tipping over. Trees should be held upright in sturdy stands that have a broad base for effective support. Larger trees may need to be secured with thin, strong wires, from points in the wall and ceiling.
- Decorations should be noncombustible or flame-retardant. Electric cords and lights should be UL- approved. While we generally don't recommend using extension cords at all, if they are used, they should be in new condition and appropriately sized to accommodate electrical requirements. All electrical cords and light strings should be carefully examined to ensure there are not exposed wires, cracked sockets, loose connections or worn insulation.
- No open flames should be used within a five foot radius measured from the outer extremities of the branches of any live tree or wreath. Candles must be in double-insulated containers or in a sturdy non-combustible base.
- Be sure to unplug all electrical decorations and extinguish all candles before leaving the premises.



We wish everyone in your diocese a safe, peaceful and happy Advent and Christmas.

### SAFETY TIP

Without proper and regular boiler and furnace maintenance, you could be left in the cold. If you haven't yet, it's time to get your heaters and boilers ready so they don't break down during the winter months ahead. Our partner, Travelers BoilerRe, passed along this [link](#) as a resource to help prevent and deal with heating and boiler equipment breakdown exposures.

### Avoid the Freeze

Freezing pipes and sprinkler systems can lead to astronomical unforeseen expenses. The good news is, these incidents can often be avoided with vigilance, knowledge and regular inspections - particularly during cold weather. Our CARES library provides valuable information for preventing frozen [sprinkler systems](#), [protecting properties from freeze damage](#), and [ice and snow removal procedures](#). Also, it is always useful to review our [Preventative Maintenance Checklist](#) when seasons change. It contains critical to-dos that will help avoid costly problems down the road.



To view this newsletter on our website, please click [here](#).