



Happy Holidays from Catholic Mutual Group

We look forward to gathering in our parishes this season to celebrate the holiday season and share in the beautiful traditions that make the season so special.

While decorating for the holidays is fun and festive, it is important to adhere to the highest safety standards. The National Fire Protection Association has a code against live trees, wreaths and garland in many nonresidential places, including schools and churches. We support this safety measure, even if your local regulations don't prohibit live greenery. In addition, we recommend the following safety tips:

- Artificial trees should be fire-retardant. Trees that meet this standard will contain the label of a nationally recognized testing laboratory.
- Use only indirect lighting if you're incorporating metallic trees into your décor, as these types of trees could become electrically charged if the edges of the metal come in contact with an exposed wire from a string of lights.
- Secure all trees to prevent tipping hazards. Use a sturdy stand with a broad base for maximum support. Larger trees may need to be secured with wires from points in the wall and ceiling.
- Utilize only noncombustible and/or flame-retardant decorations and UL-approved electric cords and lights. See our [Fire Prevention Checklist](#) for more information.
- While we generally advise against using extension cords, they should be in new condition and appropriately sized to accommodate electrical requirements if they are part of your set-up. Also, ensure they are placed in a manner that will avoid them becoming a tripping hazard. Our [Electrical Fire Safety](#) guidelines have pointers to help keep them running smoothly and safely.
- Prior to decorating, carefully examine all cords and light strings to ensure there are no exposed wires, cracked sockets, loose connections, or worn insulation.
- Candles must be in double-insulated containers or in a sturdy non-combustible base. More information on [candle safety](#) can be found in our CARES library.
- Always unplug all electrical decorations and extinguish all candles before leaving the premises.



On behalf of everyone at Catholic Mutual Group, we wish you a peaceful Advent and Merry Christmas.

Safety Tip

Many parishes utilize the St. Killian's Votive Candle System. Although this self-extinguishing candle system is designed to reduce the risk of smoke, soot, and fire damage, the St. Killian's system must be used and maintained according to manufacturer's recommendations. St. Killian's recommends maintaining a water level of at least two inches, ensuring no debris is present in the water tray, and emptying the wax twice per week.

Avoiding Winter Hazards

In addition to décor and candle safety, there are several other safety measures you should take during the holiday season and cold weather months:

- Make sure your heating systems are in proper working order. Regular furnace and boiler maintenance can avoid costly and time-consuming repairs down the road.
- Also, while we advise against using space heaters, if using one, please make sure it has been tested and certified by a nationally recognized testing laboratory. These heaters have been determined to meet specific safety standards, and manufacturers are required to provide important use and care information to the consumer. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the [best practices](#) for use.
- Ensure security systems and procedures are updated, and that all staff and parishioners are aware of appropriate safety information.



Connect with CMG Connect!

We are constantly updating our helpful trainings on CMG Connect to ensure that CMG members have the information they need to minimize their risk exposure and keep the members of our Church family free from harm. Please don't forget to check [CMG Connect](#) regularly for timely new content... and please don't hesitate to share it with others who would benefit from the information.

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

For more helpful information, please visit the Catholic Mutual Group [newsletter archives](#).

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