



Week of December 3, 2018

From The Desk of Mayor Don Ryan

With the holiday season in full swing, I thought this would be a good time to pass along some basic safety tips provided by the Fireman's Association of the State of New York that you might find useful as you go about preparing for this joyous time of the year.

When choosing a Christmas tree –

- Check the tree for dryness while at the seller's lot – shake the trunk above a light-colored surface and watch for falling needles. If too dry, many needles will fall out. Choose a fresher tree.
- Avoid trees with an artificial-looking green tint on the branches or trunk – these trees may have been spray-painted to improve their appearance. The paint used may not only be combustible, but could be hazardous as well. When in doubt, ask the seller if they sell painted trees.
- Have the merchant saw off an inch or two from the trunk of the tree to help keep the tree fresh longer at home. If your tree is left outside, placing the trunk in a bucket of water will help keep it fresh.
- When disposing of a tree, DO NOT leave it inside a home or building, and DO NOT place it against the exterior of a home or building. In both cases, the tree is likely dried out and thus poses a fire hazard.

When choosing holiday decorations and lighting –

- When possible, choose decorations made with flame-resistant, flame-retardant or non-combustible materials. Look for these designations on the product's packaging.
- Purchase lights and electrical decorations stamped with the name or symbol of an independent testing lab – for example, "UL", or Underwriters' Laboratories – and ALWAYS follow the manufacturer's instructions for installation and maintenance.
- Carefully inspect new and previously used light strands. Look for frayed cables and replace any damaged or missing bulbs before plugging lights in.
- Do not overload extension cords, "power strips" and electrical outlets.
- When using power cords to illuminate outdoor displays, ensure that they are designated for EXTERNAL or outdoor use only – NEVER use power cords that are meant for indoor use. Always check the product's packaging, which usually indicates outdoor or indoor use.
- Turn lights off overnight. If possible, use a timer device to turn your lights off automatically. This not only lessens the risk of fire, but saves on energy bills as well.

If you light holiday candles or candelabras (menorahs, window candles, etc.) –

- Keep lighted candles and candelabras at least one foot away from any combustible materials. DO NOT place candles anywhere near window curtains, furniture, wrapped gifts or anything else that could easily ignite.
- Place candles and candelabras where they cannot be knocked down or tipped/blown over. If possible, keep the candle inside a weighted holder or one with a wide base.
- Extinguish a candle before it burns to within two inches of its holder.
- NEVER leave a lighted candle unattended – extinguish a candle before leaving the room.
- Discourage the use of candles in bedrooms and other areas where you may fall asleep.
- Store matches and lighters in high places, out of the reach of children, and ideally inside a locked cabinet.
- Consider using battery-powered candles instead. If using electrical "plug-in" candles, then follow manufacturers' instructions.

Holiday cooking

- Stay in the kitchen while you're frying, grilling or broiling food.
- Most cooking fires involve the stovetop. Keep anything that can catch fire away from it, and turn off the stove when you leave the kitchen, even if it's for a short period of time.
- If you're simmering, boiling, baking or roasting food, check it regularly and use a timer to remind you that you're cooking.
- For homes with children, create a "kid-free zone" of at least three feet around the stove and areas where hot food and drinks are prepared or carried.

Following these basic guidelines will help ensure a safe and happy holiday season for you and your family.

This Week's Best of Hempstead



Natasha Dixon is the recipient of this week's Best of Hempstead honors. Born and raised in Hempstead Village, Natasha has dedicated most of her life to children. Besides raising two grown daughters and currently bringing up her 12-year old son, Natasha has worked with children throughout her 20-plus year professional career. For the past two years she has served as a breakfast and lunch monitor at Jackson Annex School and for nine years prior to that she was a youth counselor for the Boys and Girls Club at Franklin Elementary school, now known as Joseph A. McNeil Elementary School. Natasha also worked as a one-on-one aid at the Woodward Children's Center in Freeport for 12 years as well.

Recently, Natasha's quick thinking potentially averted a harmful situation when she helped protect children and parents arriving for the school day at Jackson Annex from an unrestrained pit bull that had wandered onto school grounds. While parking her car for work that morning she noticed the pit bull and literally ran from her vehicle and began ushering children into the school while keeping the dog at a distance. With the help of security guard Nathaniel Armstead they were able to chase the pit bull away keeping both the children and parents out of harm's way.

Natasha, your recent actions epitomize your lifelong commitment to nurturing our children in almost everything you do. Your contributions deserve to be recognized and so it is with great pleasure that I have the opportunity to name you one of Hempstead's best. Congratulations.

Sincerely,

Don

Don Ryan
Mayor of the Incorporated Village of Hempstead