

Make Waterloo Fire Rescue's holiday wishes come true!

(Waterloo, Ont. – December 2, 2019) Waterloo Fire Chief Richard Hepditch has a holiday wish and he needs your help to make it come true.

“I’m wishing for a fire-free holiday season this year,” says Hepditch. “But I need you to make this come true!”

While fire can happen anywhere, at anytime, it most often strikes when we let our guard down - when we’re distracted by the hustle and bustle of the holidays, by our cellphones, by the kids or by the doorbell. All it takes is for a pot to be left on the stove, or a candle left burning unattended, and a family’s holiday celebrations can turn to tragedy.

“Never leave a cooking pot unattended on the stove,” adds Hepditch, “and consider using battery-operated or electric flameless candles.”

Smoking is another leading cause of fires during the holiday season. “Make sure smokers extinguish cigarettes in large deep ashtrays – not in plant pots which may contain peat moss or shredded bark that can easily ignite,” continues Chief Hepditch. “Ashes should be emptied in a metal container – not the garbage can – and put outside.”

Waterloo Fire Rescue also reminds you to maintain working smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) alarms in your home. Install smoke alarms on every storey of your home and outside all sleeping areas. CO alarms are required outside all bedrooms. Test your smoke and CO alarms every month and install new batteries if needed.

Enjoy a fire safe holiday season by following these tips:

- Always stay in the kitchen when something is cooking on the stove.
- Place lit candles away from anything that can burn and out of the reach of children and pets where they can’t be knocked over. Remember to snuff out candles before leaving the room or going to bed. Consider using battery-operated or electric flameless candles.
- Drink responsibly. Attempting to cook or smoke while under the influence of alcohol is too often a contributing factor in fatal fires.
- Make sure to immerse the base of real Christmas trees in water at all times, to prevent them from getting too dry.
- Check all sets of decorative lights before putting them up and discard any damaged sets.
- Develop and practice a home fire escape plan so that everyone in your home knows what to do if the smoke or CO alarms sound.



For additional information about fire and life safety, please visit the Waterloo Fire Rescue website at waterloo.ca/fire or our Twitter page [@Waterloo_Fire](https://twitter.com/Waterloo_Fire).

For more information,

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