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GIGNUL MASENYGUN

12 FIRE SAFETY TIPS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

December is here, and with it comes another holiday season. Candles, fresh-cut Christmas trees, turkey, holiday party punch, decorating the house in lights - we look forward to enjoying all of these things this time of year. But, did you know these are all fire hazards, too?

Just in time for the holidays, the Fire Marshal's Public Fire Safety Council has released a list of 12 fire safety tips. Fire safety is an important topic at any time of year, but there are a few added precautions you can take to keep your family and loved one safe this holiday season:

❖ Water fresh trees daily - Keep the base of the trunk in water at all times, and place your tree away from any ignition source

like fireplaces, heaters or candles.

❖ Check all lights before decorating - Discard any sets of lights that are frayed or damaged. Never plug more than 3 strings of lights together, and don't connect LED conventional lights.

❖ Make sure smoke alarms work and replace any over 10 years old - It's the law to have working smoke alarms on every storey of your home and outside sleeping areas. Test alarms monthly and replace batteries once per year.

❖ Install a carbon monoxide (CO) alarm - If your home has a wood or gas fireplace, an attached garage or other fuel-burning device, you must have a working CO alarm outside every sleeping area - it's the law.

❖ Develop and practice a home fire escape plan - Make sure everyone in your family knows it, including guests who are staying over the holidays.

❖ Use extension cords safely - Avoid overloading plugs and extension cords, as this can cause overheating and fire. Never put cords under rugs.

❖ Give space heaters space - Keep them at least 1 metre away from things that could catch fire.

❖ Avoid using real candles, go flameless instead - If you use real candles, keep them out of reach of children and pets, and remember to blow them out before leaving the room or going to bed.

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Smoke Detectors: Ensure your smoke detectors work on each floor

Electrical Outlets: Do not overload electrical outlets by bunching up extension cords or running them under rugs.

Stay safe, and enjoy a happy holiday season!

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TENANT RESPONSIBLE FOR DAMAGE CAUSED DUE TO FROZEN WATER PIPES

QUESTION

This past summer, I moved to Ottawa and rented an apartment. Everything was fine until a couple weeks ago. I went away for three days, leaving the bathroom window open two inches. When I came back after the weekend the bathroom was a mess. Apparently, the pipes froze and flooded my bathroom and a bedroom in the apartment below. Now the landlord is suing me for \$13,000 for the cost of his plumber, the repair of the bathroom in my unit and the repair of the unit below. The tenant below is also demanding that I pay for their damaged belongings. Isn't the Landlord supposed to have insurance for accidents like this? Shouldn't the landlord have warned me not to leave the window open?

ANSWER

Tenants are responsible for repairing any undue damage to the rental unit or complex caused by their wilful or negligent conduct (or the conduct of the tenant's guests).

There is no question that the damage resulting from the burst pipes is beyond reasonable wear and tear, and constitutes undue damage. Although you did not deliberately set out to cause damage, absent some extenu-

ating circumstance, your conduct in leaving a window open for more than a very short period of time during freezing weather is negligent conduct.

In this instance, you are probably liable to both the landlord and the innocent tenant who is located below your rental unit. Your landlord may choose to proceed with a claim against you at the Landlord and Tenant Board for the damages. Failure to pay for the damages could result in the Board making an order that you pay or be evicted. Even if vacate, the landlord can pursue you for the money, for example by requiring your employer to pay a portion of your wages or salary to the Court Enforcement Office.

Although some landlords may warn tenants about the issues associated with leaving windows open, a landlord is not obligated to warn you about open windows in freezing temperatures. People who live in Ottawa are expected to know that. Likewise, a landlord does not need to warn you that leaving your home with the stove on may lead to a fire, or falling asleep while running a bath may lead to flooding. Landlords may want to warn tenants who come to them from hot climates about that issue,

but it is not negligent for a landlord not to do so.

Your landlord may well have insurance to cover his loss. In such a case, the landlord's insurer will typically pay for the repairs, but then sue you (in the landlord's name) to recover the costs. The same may apply to your neighbour if they carry tenant's insurance.

You do not mention having tenant's insurance. If you do, and you notified them of the potential claim within the time limits in the policy, your insurer would almost certainly cover the cost of the damages or defend the claims against you.

Tenant insurance is relatively inexpensive, especially when compared to the consequences of not having it when you need it. In Ottawa a typical tenant insurance policy costs about \$30 to \$40 per month and covers about \$30,000 worth of damage to a tenant's own personal belongings and \$1 million in property damage or injury which the tenant causes to another person. It can cost more or less depending on a number of factors.

**SOURCE BY: DICKIE & LYMAN LLP
WHO PRACTICE LANDLORD/
TENANT LAW AND OTHER AREAS
OF LAW**

TOP 10 MUST HAVES FOR SENIOR SAFETY

☞ Secure your scatter rugs so they aren't a trip hazard.

☞ Handrails on both sides of the stairwell.

☞ Install handrails in the restroom.

☞ Make sure entryways, stairs & pathways are properly lit.

☞ Grabbers help reach items more

than an arms length away.

☞ Install or inspect smoke alarms to assure proper functioning.

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12 FIRE SAFETY TIPS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

🔒 Keep matches and lighters out of kids' reach - If you smoke, have only one lighter or book of matches and keep it with you at all times.

🔒 Watch what you heat - Always stay in the kitchen and pay attention to your cooking, especially if using oil or high temperatures. If a pot catches fire, carefully slide a tight fitting lid cover the pot to smother the flames, then turn off the heat.

🔒 Encourage smokers to smoke outside - Careless smoking is the leading cause of fatal fires. Use large, deep ashtrays that can't be knocked

over, and make sure cigarette butts are properly extinguished.

🔒 If under the influence of alcohol, avoid cooking or smoking - Alcohol is often a common factor in many fatal fires.

Watch The Holiday Spirits

It's a fact that many fire deaths are caused by people attempting to cook or smoke while under the influence of alcohol.

There's more to responsible drinking than taking a cab. Don't put yourself or your family at risk to fire.

Last but not least - make sure your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors work. Effective March 1, 2006, one working smoke alarm is required on every level of your home. **IT'S THE LAW!**

GIFT SUGGESTIONS

Home Smoke Alarm

Carbon Monoxide Detector

Multi-purpose (ABC) Fire Extinguisher

Candle Snuffer

Thermostatically Controlled Deep Fryer

CHRISTMAS TREE SAFETY

As you deck the halls this holiday season, be fire smart. A small fire that spreads to a Christmas tree can grow large very quickly.

Picking The Tree

🔒 Choose a tree with fresh, green needles that do not fall off when touched.

Placing The Tree

🔒 Before placing the tree in the stand, cut 2" from the base of the trunk.

🔒 Make sure the tree is at least three feet away from any heat source, like fireplaces, radiators, candles, heat vents or lights.

🔒 Make sure the tree is not blocking an exit.

🔒 Add water to the tree stands. Be

sure to add water daily.

Lighting The Tree

🔒 Use lights that have the label of a recognized testing laboratory. Some lights are only for indoor or outdoor use.

🔒 Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Read manufacturer's instructions for number of light strands to connect.

🔒 Never use lit candles to decorate the tree.

🔒 Always turn off Christmas tree lights before leaving home or going to bed.

After Christmas

Get rid of the tree after Christmas or when it is dry. Dried-out trees are a

fire danger and should not be left in the home or garage, or placed outside against the home.

Check with your local community to find a recycling program.

Bring outdoor electrical lights inside after the holidays to prevent hazards and make them last longer.

Facts

(!) **One** of every three home Christmas tree fires is caused by electrical problems.

(!) Although Christmas tree fires are not common, when they do occur, they are more likely to be serious.

(!) A heat source too close to the tree causes roughly **one in every four** of the fires.

WINTER HOLIDAY FIRE SAFETY

Are You Ready For A Safe Holiday?

Cooking Safety

Cooking is the number one cause of home fires. Cooking oil and fat fires account for a large proportion of these fires. Be extra careful when cooking. The best way to fry foods is to use an electric-temperature-controlled skillet or a deep-fat-fryer.

Here's what to do if cooking oil or fat in a pot or pan catches fire:

- ☞ Turn off the heat immediately.
- ☞ Smother the flames by covering the pan with a lid.
- ☞ Use baking soda (flour can be explosive) on shallow grease fires.
- ☞ Never turn on the overhead fan, as this could spread the fire.
- ☞ Never throw water on a grease fire, as an explosive fireball could fill the kitchen.

A stovetop fire can start in a flash, so

never leave stovetop cooking unattended. Keep all combustibles away from the stove. This includes tea towels, wooden or plastic spoons and paper towels.

Safe Social Gathering

Social occasions coupled with alcohol consumption, cooking, smoking or unattended candles can create a fire risk. To minimize the risk at parties:

- ☞ Plan your event in advance so you have enough time to prepare the meal. Hurried cooking activities, multitasking and neglecting fire safety can be ingredients for an unwanted house fire.
- ☞ Avoid overcrowding.
- ☞ Encourage guests to smoke outside. Provide them with a safe ashtray.
- ☞ Refrain from burning candles during parties. They can easily be accidentally knocked over or ignite nearby combustibles.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Best Ever Cranberry Sauce

Ingredients:

- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup orange juice
- 1/2 cup water
- 12 oz. fresh cranberries rinsed & picked through
- pinch of salt
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1 piece of orange peel

Instructions:

Combine sugar, orange juice, and water in a large saucepan over medium heat. Stir to combine. Add cranberries, salt, cinnamon stick and orange peel. Bring to a simmer over medium heat, stirring frequently.

Continue cooking for about 10 minutes, or until all or most of the cranberries have popped. If you like leave a handful of berries whole.

Let cool for at least 30 minutes. Cover and refrigerate until ready to use. Can be made up to 3 days in advance.

PAY & WIN

Pay & Win means Tenants has to have a zero balance on their rent for that month.

Then Tenants will be eligible for a gift certificate of \$75.00.

That's why we recommend all tenants pay their rent first of each month to be eligible for a draw.

PAY & WIN



Congratulations to

JESSICA LOPES

for November's Pay & Win Winner!

TOP 10 MUST HAVES FOR SENIOR SAFETY

- ☞ Medical Alert Systems allow easy call for help in an emergency.
- ☞ Properly label & store medications. Setup medication reminders.
- ☞ Schedule frequent family or neighbour times to check-in.
- ☞ Don't forget to get non-skid bathroom mats to prevent slips.

Tenants in the future, please call the office to see if your gift certificate is ready before coming to the office. Thank you

