

Shelburne Fire Chief gives reminder for holiday and seasonal fire safety

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With two days left in the 12 Days of Holiday Fire and Co Safety, Shelburne Fire Chief Ralph Snyder is giving a reminder to local residents on how to stay safe during the holidays and winter season.

The 12 Days of Holiday Fire and Co Safety tips, launched locally on Dec. 7, giving tips on how to remain safe during the holidays. The list of tips notes some of the common contributors for calls during the holidays and how to avoid them.

Chief Snyder said common contributors for calls during this time of year include kitchen fires, extension cords with too much plugged in, dry Christmas trees, and candles.

“Around Christmas there are more kitchen fires, part of it is that people are cooking more, sometimes there are beverages involved which cause a problem, people need to pay attention and stay in the kitchen when they're cooking,” said Snyder. “Extension cords are always an issue – no more than three sets of Christmas lights to an extension cord – make sure you keep the trunk of the tree wet all the time and when it gets dry that the needles are coming off, it's time to move it outside.”

Another main contributor of emergency calls is carbon monoxide.

“This time of year heating appliances are being [used] and they need to be inspected,” said Chief Snyder. “Wood stoves, make sure your chimney's are drafting properly, cleaned by certified technicians, gas fired appliance and gas fired fireplaces, they all create carbon monoxide. they all have the potential to cause carbon monoxide if they're not serviced properly.”

In December 2019 Shelburne's Fire Department responded to about 25 calls in the month that equaled around 20 percent of their calls each year. Out of those 25 calls, five were carbon monoxide related.

“We usually start getting out first carbon monoxide call in October as the temperature gets colder, people start turning on fuel burning appliances, and windows are closed,” said Chief Snyder.

He encourages the community to ensure they have smoke and CO alarms in their residence as well as checking the batteries.

“[Batteries] lose voltage when they get cold so as the colder weather comes, if your house gets cooler, your alarm will give you a battery alarm. If you hear a single beep every minute that means you've got a defective detector of some sort; it's either the battery's low, or it's expired.”

In conclusion he said, “they save more lives than firefighter every day,” in reference to the CO and smoke alarms.