



The American Trauma Society, Pennsylvania Division (ATSPA) is a non-profit organization, dedicated to injury prevention and mitigation through education, intervention and advocacy.

For more information visit:  
[www.atspa.org](http://www.atspa.org)

## OLDER ADULT SAFETY

As our population ages, ensuring the safety of older adults becomes an increasingly important concern. There are several key areas to focus on to promote the well-being of older individuals.

### Fall Prevention

Falls are a leading cause of injury among older adults. Follow these tips to reduce the risk of falls:

- **Exercise Regularly:** Engaging in activities that improve strength, balance, and flexibility can significantly decrease the likelihood of falls. Consider activities like walking, tai chi, or water aerobics.
- **Home Modifications:** Install handrails, grab bars, and adequate lighting in hallways and staircases. Remove tripping hazards like loose rugs and clutter.
- **Regular Vision Check-ups:** Seniors should have regular eye exams to ensure they have the correct prescription and to identify any age-related eye conditions.

### Winter Hazards

Cold temperatures, icy sidewalks, and snow-covered driveways can pose their own serious risks. Here are some winter safety tips:

- **Dress Warmly:** Layer clothing to stay warm and wear sturdy, slip-resistant footwear to navigate icy surfaces.
- **Home Heating Safety:** Ensure that heating systems are in good working order and use space heaters with caution.
- **Snow and Ice Removal:** If possible, hire a service to clear driveways and walkways. If doing it yourself, take breaks, use proper snow removal techniques, and consider using de-icing products.

### Driving Safety

Maintaining independence through driving is important for many older adults, but it's crucial to address safety concerns:

- **Regular Driving Assessments:** If there are concerns, consider taking a defensive driving course or participating in a driving assessment program.
- **Stay Informed about Medications:** Some medications can affect reaction times and cognitive function. Consult with healthcare professionals to understand any potential side effects.
- **Alternative Transportation Options:** Encourage the use of public transportation, rideshare services, or community transportation programs when appropriate.

By implementing these practical tips and staying proactive in addressing potential risks, older adults can enjoy a safer and more secure lifestyle.

# Out of Harm's Way

The Trauma Prevention Publication

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### TOP NEWS TOPICS

- Older Adult Safety
- 'Tis the Season of Safety
- Gift with Safety in Mind
- Important notices from the ATSPA
- Research

# 'TIS THE SEASON OF SAFETY

The holiday season is a time of joy, warmth, and celebration. However, it's also a time when the risk of home fires tends to increase. From twinkling lights, to festive candles, to elaborate cooking sessions, the holidays bring about unique fire hazards. In this article, we'll explore essential tips to help you safeguard your home and loved ones, ensuring a fire-safe and cheerful holiday season.

## Mindful Decorating:

- **Inspect Lights:** Before decking the halls with strings of lights, carefully inspect them for frayed wires, broken sockets, or any other signs of damage. Discard damaged lights and replace them with new, safe ones.
- **Avoid Overloading Outlets:** Resist the temptation to daisy-chain multiple extension cords or overload outlets. Spread the load across different circuits to prevent overheating and potential fires.
- **Choose Flame-Resistant Decorations:** Opt for flame-resistant or flame-retardant decorations to minimize the risk of ignition.

## Candle Safety:

- **Never Leave Candles Unattended:** It's easy to get caught up in the festive atmosphere, but leaving candles burning without supervision is a significant fire risk. Always extinguish candles before leaving a room or going to bed.
- **Use Candle Holders:** Place candles in stable holders, away from flammable materials, and ensure they are kept out of reach of pets and children.
- **Consider Flameless Alternatives:** Flameless LED candles provide a safe alternative to traditional candles, offering the same warm ambiance without the fire hazard.

## Safe Cooking Practices:

- **Stay in the Kitchen:** When cooking holiday feasts, stay in the kitchen to keep an eye on the stove and oven. Unattended cooking is a leading cause of home fires.
- **Keep Flammable Items Away:** Ensure that kitchen towels, oven mitts, and other flammable items are kept away from heat sources.
- **Test Smoke Alarms:** Test and replace the batteries in smoke alarms regularly, especially before embarking on extensive cooking sessions.

## Christmas Tree Safety:

- **Choose a Fresh Tree:** If opting for a real Christmas tree, ensure it's fresh. A dry tree is more susceptible to catching fire. Keep it watered regularly.
- **Place the Tree Safely:** Position the tree away from heat sources such as fireplaces and radiators. Ensure it does not block exits.
- **Turn Off Lights:** Before going to bed or leaving the house, turn off Christmas lights on both the tree and around the home to prevent overheating.

## Emergency Preparedness:

- **Have a Fire Escape Plan:** Ensure everyone in the household is aware of the fire escape plan. Designate meeting points outside the home.
- **Keep Fire Extinguishers Handy:** Have fire extinguishers in key areas of the home, particularly in the kitchen and near the Christmas tree.
- **Emergency Contacts:** Keep emergency contact numbers, including those of the local fire department, readily accessible.

By incorporating these simple yet crucial safety measures into your holiday preparations, you can significantly reduce the risk of home fires. Prioritizing safety allows you to fully enjoy the festive season, creating cherished memories without the worry of potential hazards. May your holidays be merry, bright, and above all, safe!

**12 DAYS OF HOLIDAY SAFETY**  
*to try this holiday*

- 1. CALL A CAB**  
Drinking and driving is never a good option. Even if you have had one, the best choice you can make for your holiday season is to get home safely. Call a cab, schedule an Uber, plan a designated driver.
- 2. FEED THEM SAFELY**  
When preparing your meals, wash hands, utensils, sink and anything else that touches raw meat. ALWAYS cook food to the USDA recommended temperature.
- 3. CALL A CAB**  
Drinking and driving is never a good option. Even if you have had one, the best choice you can make for your holiday season is to get home safely. Call a cab, schedule an Uber, plan a designated driver.
- 4. PREPARE FOR TRAVEL**  
Put together a winter-emergency kit for your vehicle. Make sure that you have extra layers, food and water packed. Plan ahead by checking the weather and road conditions. Ultimately, if the roads are bad, stay home.
- 5. TURN OFF**  
Some lights and decorations can and do get very warm when left on. Turning off all decorations and lights when not in use will save your home, holidays and electric bill.
- 6. CHECK WIRES**  
Check holiday lights and decorations for wires that are fraying, have bare spots, gaps in the insulation or excessive kinking in the wires. This can cause a fire or shock someone.
- 7. WATER THE TREE**  
If you have chosen a natural tree, keep it well watered and hydrated. A dry tree is more flammable.
- 8. PREVENT A FIRE**  
Holiday decorations can be highly flammable. Be sure to keep them at least 10 feet from open flames, such as menorahs, candles, and fireplaces, as well as radiators, ovens and other heat sources.
- 9. CHECK YOUR ALARMS**  
With so many opportunities for a fire to occur, it is important to know as quickly as possible to get out of your home. Check your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, change the batteries if needed.
- 10. CHOOSE THE RIGHT DECOR**  
When choosing an artificial tree look for one that is labeled "fire resistant". Use LED lights for less heat and make sure that any outdoor decor or cords are made for outdoor use.
- 11. SAFE CLIMBING**  
Ensure that ladder and step stools are used for anything needing to be hung or taken down. Ladders should be placed on a firm, flat surface. Anytime you are climbing, it is a good idea to have a helper to hand you and take items from you.
- 12. GET THE RIGHT GIFT**  
Make sure that your gifts are age, skill and developmentally appropriate. Make sure to keep singing cards, toys with small parts, and batteries away from babies and toddlers to ensure a safe holiday.

www.atpsa.org

# DECEMBER 2023 OBSERVANCES

## Monthly Observance:

*Safe Toy and Gift Month*

## Weekly or Daily Observances:

- Dec. 7 - 15: Hanukkah

- Dec. 25: Christmas

- Dec. 25 - Jan. 1: The ATSPA  
office will be closed

# GIFT WITH SAFETY IN MIND

As winter holidays approach, the excitement of gift-giving and receiving reaches its peak. Choosing the perfect toy for your loved ones involves more than just finding the latest trends—it requires thoughtful consideration of safety, age-appropriateness, and educational value. In this guide, we'll explore key factors to keep in mind when selecting and purchasing toys, ensuring a joyful and safe holiday season for children of all ages.

## Age-Appropriate Choices:

- **Check Age Recommendations:** Pay attention to age recommendations provided by the toy manufacturer. These guidelines are crucial for selecting toys that align with a child's developmental stage and abilities.
- **Small Parts Warning:** Be cautious of toys with small parts that could pose a choking hazard, especially for younger children. If a toy includes small pieces, ensure they are securely attached and appropriate for the child's age.

## Quality and Durability:

- **Check for Sturdy Construction:** Inspect the quality of materials and construction to ensure the toy is durable and can withstand regular play.
- **Non-Toxic Materials:** Opt for toys made from non-toxic materials. Check for labels indicating compliance with safety standards such as ASTM International or the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).

## Educational Value:

- **Promote Learning:** Choose toys that stimulate creativity, problem-solving, and skill development. Look for items that align with the child's interests and encourage exploration and imagination.
- **Consider Multi-Purpose Toys:** Select toys that can be used in various ways, allowing for prolonged engagement and learning experiences.

## Recalls:

- **Research Recalls:** Before making a purchase, check for any recalls related to the specific toy. The CPSC regularly updates its website with information about unsafe or recalled products.
- **Register the Toy:** If applicable, register the toy with the manufacturer to receive updates on recalls or safety concerns.

## Battery Safety:

- **Secure Battery Compartments:** Ensure that battery compartments are secure and require a tool to open. This prevents young children from accessing potentially harmful batteries.
- **Use the Right Batteries:** Follow the manufacturer's recommendations regarding the type and size of batteries to use. Never mix old and new batteries or different battery types.

## Outdoor Toy Considerations:

- **Helmet and Safety Gear:** If selecting outdoor toys like bicycles, skateboards, or scooters, include appropriate safety gear such as helmets, knee pads, and elbow pads.
- **Weather-Resistant Materials:** Ensure that outdoor toys are made from materials that can withstand winter weather conditions without compromising safety.

## Supervision and Guidelines:

- **Establish Play Guidelines:** Set clear guidelines for play, especially if the toy involves physical activity or specific safety precautions.
- **Supervise Playtime:** Regularly supervise children during playtime to ensure they are using toys appropriately and safely.

The winter holidays are a time for joy, and selecting the right toys enhances the celebration while prioritizing safety. By considering age-appropriateness, quality, educational value, and other safety factors, you can make informed choices that bring happiness to the children in your life while providing peace of mind for parents and caregivers. May your holiday season be filled with laughter, learning, and safe play!



## How to choose the perfect gift

- CONSIDER AGE RECOMMENDATIONS.
- CHECK FOR A SMALL PARTS WARNING.
- INSPECT FOR STURDY CONSTRUCTION.
- OPT FOR TOYS MADE FROM NON-TOXIC MATERIALS.
- PROMOTE LEARNING.
- RESEARCH RECALLS AND REGISTER TOYS.
- KEEP BATTERIES OUT OF REACH AND SECURE BATTERY COMPARTMENTS.
- INCLUDE HELMETS AND SAFETY GEAR.
- SUPERVISE PLAYTIME.



## ATSPA Board of Directors Nominations Apply TODAY!

If you are interested in applying or want to nominate someone, use this [link](#).

For more information on the opportunity, visit our [website](#).

## We turned the Pennsylvania Capitol Green in honor of National Injury Prevention Day!



Thank you to the Pennsylvania Department of General Services for making this happen.

### Latest IVP News and Research

#### Research

- [Harris E. New CDC Campaign Targets Health Care Worker Burnout. JAMA. Published online November 15, 2023. doi:10.1001/jama.2023.22350](#)

- [Voelker R, Hswen Y. Clinical AI Tools Must Be Fed the Right Data, Stanford Health Care's Chief Data Scientist Says. JAMA. Published online November 15, 2023. doi:10.1001/jama.2023.19297](#)

- [Mehra MR, Netuka I, Uriel N, et al. Aspirin and Hemocompatibility Events With a Left Ventricular Assist Device in Advanced Heart Failure: The ARIES-HM3 Randomized Clinical Trial. JAMA. Published online November 11, 2023. doi:10.1001/jama.2023.23204](#)

Stay connected with us:



2 Flowers Drive, Mechanicsburg, PA 17050

Email: [scarns@atspa.org](mailto:scarns@atspa.org), Web: [www.atspa.org](http://www.atspa.org)

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## Save the Date 2024 ATSPA Annual Conference April 23 & 24 Lancaster Marriott at Penn Square

Registration will open shortly after the first of the year, watch for details.

We hope that you will share this opportunity with trauma nurses, doctors, social workers, EMS Personnel, PT/OT, and others who want to attend. There is a flyer located on our conference page for you to share with colleagues.

Our website also contains information for:

[Award Nominations](#)

[Sponsorship and Exhibitor Opportunities](#)

[Scholarship Information](#)

[Hotel Information](#)

For more information, or to check the status of our planning, visit our [website](#).

## Save the Date ATSPA 50th Anniversary Celebration April 23, 2024 Lancaster Marriott at Penn Square

This business attire event will include a reception and dinner.

Please join us in celebrating "50 Years of Saving Lives."

For more information on the 50th Anniversary, visit our [website](#).

[ATSPA, SCPAHS, and Safe Kids PA Staff](#)

Krista Brands, ATSPA Chief Executive Officer

Allyson Fulton, ATSPA Assistant Director

Kim Nunemaker, ATSPA Educational Program and Event Coordinator

Sadie Carns, ATSPA Communications Coordinator

Matt Frampton, SCPAHS Coordinator

Chris Bendl, SCPAHS Assistant Coordinator

Karen Rowe, SCPAHS Program Specialist

Jessica Ritter, Safe Kids Pennsylvania State Office Coordinator