This time of year there’s an increased risk of house fires. Your Christmas trees, candles, and even cooking can lead to seasonal fires. Please follow these fire safety tips from the Mathews Volunteer Fire Department to keep your holidays from going up in flames.

Unattended cooking, holiday candles, and Christmas trees are amoung the leading causes of house fires.

When it comes to cooking, firefighters say you should keep flammable items away from the stove and make sure you turn it off when you leave the kitchen.

If simmering, baking, boiling, or roasting check the food often and use a timer to remind you that you’re cooking.

As for candles, the fire department reminds everyone to keep them at leave twelve inches from anything that can burn. Also, remember to blow them out when you leave the room or go to bed.

Many house fires are also caused by Christmas trees. Here are a few things to keep in mind about your Christmas tree. People need to make sure to keep your tree at least three feet away from any heat source and always turn off the tree lights before leaving the house or going to bed.

Don’t let your tree block exits in your home. Don’t use candles by your Christmas trees or any other open flame.

If you have live trees to make sure you keep them watered.

Be sure to get rid of it after Christmas. Dried – out trees are a fire hazard even if their left in the garage or placed outside next to the house.

Everyone needs to have a working smoke alarm in their home and a fire extinguisher.

From the Mathews Volunteer Fire Department.

Have a Merry Christmas and a Safe and Happy New Year.