### Winter holiday decorations mean higher risk of fire

ents and caregivers to take precautions when decorating for Christmas and other winter festivities. Holiday decorations, especially candles and electrical lighting, can be a fire hazard.

From 2004 to 2008, the National Fire Protection Agency estimated that decorations, excluding Christmas trees, were the item first ignited in an average of 1,170 home fires a year. Half of these fires occurred because the decoration was too close to a heat source. Forty-five percent were started by candles, especially on Christmas, Christmas Eve, New Year's Day, Halloween and Dec. 23.

choosing your lighting. "Deco- under a rug.

Safe Kids Kansas reminds par- rative lighting should be labeled testing lab," says Cherie Sage of Safe Kids. "If it's not labeled for outdoor use, don't use it out-

trees, both natural and artificial, were the item first ignited in about a lower risk of fire. 240 report home fires a year from 2005 to 2009.

If you decorate a tree, here are some precautions.

• Never leave a lit Christmas tree or lighting display unattended. Inspect lights for exposed or frayed wires, loose connections and broken sockets. Do not overload extension cords or outlets Pay attention to labels when and do not run an electrical cord branches, treated wood or wrap-

with the seal of an independent ways involve some risk of fire. To minimize the risk, get a fresh tree and keep it watered. Do not put the tree within three feet of a fireplace, space heater, radiator or The agency said that Christmas heat vent. LED lights burn cooler than incandescent lights and pose

• Decorate with children in mind. Do not put ornaments that have small parts or metal hooks, or look like food or candy, on lower branches where small children can reach them. Trim protruding branches at or below a child's eye level, and keep lights out of

• Do not burn Christmas tree ping paper in a fireplace.

a tree or near curtains or drapes. Keep matches and lighters locked out of reach. Battery-operated flameless candles are an alterna-

These tips may prevent accidental poisoning.

 Keep alcohol, including baking extracts, out of reach and do not leave alcoholic drinks unattended. Store all medications, including those for children, out of

· Color additives used in fireplace fires are toxic and should be stored out of reach. Artificial snow sprays are also harmful if inhaled.

 Holly berries, mistletoe berries, poinsettias, amaryllis, boxwood,

• Never leave burning candles Christmas rose, Crown of Thorns, Center at (800) 222-1222 unattended. Don't put candles on English ivy and Jerusalem cherry are all potentially harmful if eaten. Kids Kansas website, at www. If a child eats any part of a non-safekids.org. food plant, call the Poison Control

For information, go to the Safe

### Lawmen collect socks for kids during holiday

GILBERT, S.C. (AP) - Law trict officials are collecting new, officers in Lexington County are unwrapped socks for donation to lending a hand to some sick chil- children who have cancer and are dren this holiday season.

Sheriff James Metts says his deputies are working with Lexington County School District 1 for something called "Socks to Sole." Starting Today, deputies and dis-

undergoing medical treatment at Palmetto Health Children's Hospital.

The drive runs through Dec.

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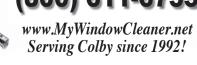
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