

Twelve Days of Holiday Safety from the Mid-Michigan Red Cross

In the spirit of the season, the American Red Cross offers 12 holiday safety tips.

LANSING, December 17 —With last-minute gifts to buy, social events to attend, and family and friends to visit while the weather outside is frightful, the American Red Cross has 12 days of health and safety tips to make the holiday season safe, happy and bright.

1. Prepare your vehicle for traveling to grandmother's house. Make an emergency kit and include items such as blankets or sleeping bags, jumper cables, fire extinguisher (5 lb., A-B-C type), compass and road maps, shovel, tire repair kit and pump, extra clothing, flares, tow rope. To get a safety kit for your car, call Tracy at (517) 702-3334.

2. Drive your sleigh and reindeer safely. Avoid driving in a storm, but if you must, keep your gas tank full for emergency use and to keep the fuel line from freezing. Let someone know your destination, route and when you expect to arrive.

3. Help prevent the spread of the flu. Wash hands with soap and water as often as possible, or use hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol. Use sanitizing wipes to disinfect hard surfaces such as airplane tray tables, luggage handles, cell phones, door handles and seat armrests.

4. Prevent hypothermia by following Santa's lead. Dress in several layers of lightweight clothing, which will keep you warmer than a single heavy coat. Wear a hat, preferably one that covers your ears. Seek medical attention immediately if you have symptoms of hypothermia, including confusion, dizziness, exhaustion and severe shivering.

5. Use a Red Cross-trained babysitter when attending holiday festivities. Red Cross-certified babysitters learn to administer basic first aid; properly hold and feed a child; take emergency action when needed; monitor safe play and actively engage your child; and some may be certified in Infant and Child CPR. For more info on babysitter training (or other Red Cross training), contact Tracy at (517) 702-3334 or tpanich@midmichiganredcross.org.

6. Avoid danger while roasting chestnuts over an open fire. Stay in the kitchen while you are cooking and be alert. Keep anything flammable—such as potholders, towels or curtains—away from your stove top. Have a “kid-free zone” of at least 3 feet around the stove and areas where hot food or drinks are prepared or carried.

7. Be a lifesaver during the holidays and always. The Red Cross recommends at least one person in every household should be trained and certified in first aid and CPR/AED. Your local Red Cross chapter has conveniently scheduled courses and can have you trained and certified in a few hours. Check out the classes on www.midmichiganredcross.org, and click on ‘get trained.’



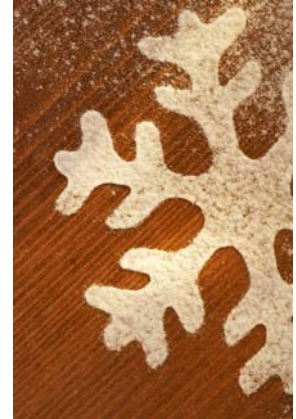
8. Designate a driver or skip the holiday cheer. When you designate a driver who won't be drinking, you help make sure a good party doesn't turn into a tragedy. A good host ensures there are non-alcoholic beverages available for drivers. The designated driver should not drink any alcoholic beverages, not even one.

9. When the weather outside is frightful, heat your home safely. Never use your stove or oven to heat your home. Never leave portable heaters or fireplaces unattended. Install smoke alarms on every floor of your home and outside all sleeping areas and test them once a month.

10. Cut down on your heating bills without being a Grinch. Get your furnace cleaned by a professional; change the filters regularly. Make sure heat vents aren't blocked by furniture. Close off any rooms you aren't using and close heat vents or turn off radiators in those rooms. Use either insulating tape or caulking strips to surround your windows and door moldings. Put up storm windows or storm doors to keep the cold out.

11. Don't move a muscle, until they buckle. Each person in your vehicle should have their seatbelts securely fastened before driving off. Ensure children are buckled up and their car seats are installed appropriately based on their age and size. Children 12 and under should always sit in the backseat.

12. Resolve to Be Red Cross Ready in the New Year. You can take one or more actions to prepare now, should you or your family face an emergency in 2010. Get a kit. Make a plan. Be informed.



Best wishes for a safe and happy holiday from the Mid-Michigan Red Cross!

Visit www.MidMichiganRedCross.org to learn more about **your local Red Cross chapter** and the services they provide to our community.