



FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service hopes this festive season is one to remember for all the right reasons and is urging communities to bear safety in mind.

The Service will be working hard as always to ensure communities are safe from fire as they enjoy the festive season. Aberdeen Station Manager Gordon Riddel said: **“We want people to have fun, but take care to prevent the worst from happening. “In many homes, there will be more materials that are combustible over the festive period, such as Christmas trees, decorations and cards which are all highly flammable.**

“We would urge people to **exercise caution when using candles**, particularly



if winter weather causes power cuts and people opt to use candle. We would always advise using

torches instead.

“Candles left unattended are a very real fire hazard. We need to make sure that we are all being responsible and taking care to prevent a real tragedy.”

SFRS is also urging residents to get in touch if they know someone who is elderly, vulnerable or living without smoke detection in their home.

Station Manager Riddel said: “It could be a friend, relative or an elderly person

you know living alone. We would urge you to encourage them to get in touch with the Service or contact us yourself and arrange a free Home Fire Safety Visit for them.

“We can provide smoke detectors free of charge. A

smoke alarm provides vital early warning when fire breaks out and is the best way to protect people and property from a blaze. “Taking just two minutes now to check that your own smoke alarm or the smoke alarm of someone you know is working properly could save a life.”

Anyone can join Scotland’s fight against fire and register for a free home fire safety visit by calling 0800 0731 999, texting ‘check’ to 61611, filling out a form at www.firescotland.gov.uk or by contacting their local fire station.

Station Manager Riddel added: “Every year around this time, we see a rise in the number of house fires in. This is due in part, to an increase in the public’s alcohol consumption and cooking after drinking. There may also be more people in a property than normal and more combustible materials lying around.

“The fact is that alcohol and cooking are a potentially lethal combination.

Anyone who is cooking after having had a drink must be aware of the risk and take extreme care.

“House fires are preventable and by taking a few simple measures throughout the holiday period you can keep you, your family and home safe.”

The Service would also like to remind people about the dangers of drink driving

if they are attending Christmas parties or visiting friends or relatives.

Station Manager Gordon Riddel added: “As well as our fire and rescue capability the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service is called to respond to road traffic collisions and the risks are heightened at this time of year due to poor weather and people taking a risk by drink driving.

“We would urge people to **drive according to the conditions of the road** and don’t make any unnecessary journeys if the weather is poor. **Our message in relation to drink driving is simple – don’t risk it.** The legal drink drive limit was recently reduced and our advice would be if you are driving don’t drink anything. Identify a designated driver and stay safe.”

SFRS has compiled some simple measures that the public can take to keep themselves safe from fire throughout the holidays:

- Check your smoke and heat alarms are working. Replace the batteries now if necessary.
- If you have an open fire make sure your chimney is swept. Always use a fireguard, secured in position, to protect against flying sparks from hot embers.
- Never place Christmas cards or decorations around the mantelpiece.
- Check your Christmas light plugs are fitted with the correct fuse, don’t overload extension leads and ensure all electrical devices are Intertek BEAB approved.
- Always switch Christmas lights off and unplug them before you go to bed.
- Decorations can burn easily – don’t place them near lights or heaters.
- Never leave cooking unattended, especially when using hot oil. For an early warning of fire, consider fitting a heat alarm in your kitchen.
- If you’ve been drinking alcohol, avoid cooking.
- Smoking is the main cause of death from fire in the home. Avoid a smoking related fire by making sure cigarettes are put out properly. Never smoke in bed. Don’t smoke in your chair if you’ve been drinking or you’re feeling tired. If you do feel tired, smoke outside or stand up and smoke at a window or outside door.
- Take time to check on elderly relatives and neighbours this Christmas, as they are at greater risk from fire, particularly if they suffer from ill health or a disability. SFRS has compiled some simple measures that the public can take to keep themselves safe from fire throughout the holidays: