



## Fire & Life Safety Council

December 2008

### Fire & Life Safety Council Members

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### A Word from the Chair

It has been a great year for the Fire & Life Safety Council.

I can remember our first meeting at ASIS International Headquarters on January 18, 2008 with only Scott and myself in attendance. We spent the day setting goals for the year. The first goal was to get more people involved as members. By February 1<sup>st</sup> we had eight new members, three of which were International ASIS members. Then we decided on publishing a newsletter and since you are reading it, you can see that was a goal reached. As a matter of fact, the North Texas Chapter published the fall issue as a part of their Chapter Newsletter to 600 + members.

We joined the Crisis Management and Business Continuity Council as a presenter for their annual workshop in February. We set up a booth at the ASIS New York City Chapter's annual Expo.

In June we attended the Volunteer Leadership Meeting in Puerto Rico and conducted a training session for the Council Chairs on "Council Recruitment."

In March we joined with the Downtown Association Rescue Team, the Dallas Fire & Rescue, the Dallas Police Department, and Renaissance

Tower in a highrise rescue exercise. In August we were represented in a full-scale exercise involving the San Francisco Fire Department, the State of California, the Office of Emergency Management, and the FBI in a terrorist-related emergency exercise conducted in downtown San Francisco

Not only did we conduct a presentation for the Annual Seminar & Exhibits in Atlanta that was well attended, our team sponsored a Council Booth, a Networking Luncheon Table, had a council meeting, and provided Moderators for sessions at the Seminar.

We published articles in Security Magazine, EuroDynamics, Dynamics and Chapter Newsletters.

We contacted every Chapter Chair by mail to encourage them to make recognize and promote Fire Safety in their October Meeting. October is National Fire Safety Month.

Our members made the commitment to present programs at their local chapter meetings and a PowerPoint presentation was developed to use for these engagements.

I want to thank all of our council members for their fantastic efforts this year, which has truly made the Fire & Life Safety Council a success.

### **'Tis the Season for Candles**

**By: William A. Minear, II, CPP, PSP**

The use of candles creates an increased risk for fire, especially during this time of year, according to information published by the National Fire Protection Association. During 2005, an estimated 15,600 home-structure fires started by candles were reported to local fire departments. These fires resulted in an estimated 150 civilian deaths, 1,270 civilian injuries and an estimated direct property loss of \$539 million (NFPA fact sheet).

As the holiday season approaches, we should be reminded that the top five days for home candle fires are Christmas, Christmas Eve, New Year's Day, New Year's Eve, and Halloween. More than half of the candle fires started when something that could burn, such as furniture, curtains, clothing, mattresses or bedding, and decorations were too close to the candle.

The National Fire Protection Association provides the following safety tips for those who choose to add candles to their holiday festive array of decorations. Please keep in mind the following safe practices:

- Keep candles at least 12 inches from anything that can burn.
- Use sturdy, safe candleholders.
- Never leave a burning candle unattended. Extinguish candles when you leave the room.
- Be careful not to splatter wax when extinguishing a candle.
- Avoid using candles in bedrooms and sleeping areas.
- Always use a flashlight, not a candle, for emergency lighting.

- Consider using battery-operated flameless candles.

Take the time to plan a bit of fire and life safety into your upcoming holiday season. It could be one of the greatest gifts you give to those you love.

Happy Holidays!

## References

NFPA: Research & Reports: Fact sheets, retrieved from <http://www.nfpa.org/itemDetail.asp?categoryID=638&itemID=19184&URL=Research%20&%20Reports/Fact%20sheets/Candles>

## Christmas Tree Safety Tips

by **Scott R. Gane, CPP**

For many people, decorating the Christmas tree is a favorite part of the holiday. The following are some safety tips to make sure a mishap doesn't spoil your holiday season.



## Christmas Trees

- ✓ A real tree can add to the spirit of Christmas by filling your home with beauty and the scent of pine. But a real tree can also pose a fire hazard. Each year, more than 400 residential fires involve Christmas trees and tragically nearly 40 deaths and 100 injuries result from those fires.
- ✓ Try to select a fresh tree by looking for one that is green. The needles of pines and spruces should bend and not break and should be hard to pull off the branches. On fir species, a needle pulled from a fresh tree will snap when bent, much like a fresh carrot. Also, look for a trunk sticky with sap.
- ✓ If you buy your tree early and keep it outside, store it away from wind and sun, and keep the bottom in a bucket of water.
- ✓ Cut off about two inches of the trunk and put the tree in a sturdy, water-holding stand. Keep the stand filled with water so the tree does not dry out quickly.
- ✓ Stand your tree away from fireplaces, radiators and other heat sources. Make sure the tree does not block foot traffic or doorways.
- ✓ If you use an artificial tree, choose one that tested and labeled as fire resistant. Artificial trees with built-in electrical systems should have the Underwriters Laboratory (UL) label.

## Tree ornaments

- Always use the proper step stool or ladder to reach high places.
- Read labels before you use materials that come in jars, cans and spray cans.
- Never place lighted candles on a tree or near any flammable materials.
- Avoid placing breakable tree ornaments or ones with small, detachable parts on lower branches where small children or pets can reach them.

- Do not hang popcorn chains and candy canes on the tree when small children are present. They may think that other tree ornaments are also edible.

## **Tree lights**

- ❖ Only use indoor lights indoors (and outdoor lights only outdoors). Look for the UL label. Check lights for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections. Replace or repair any damaged light sets.
- ❖ Don't use electric lights on a metal tree.
- ❖ Also, use no more than three light sets on any one extension cord. Extension cords should be placed against the wall to avoid tripping hazards, but do not run cords under rugs.
- ❖ Turn off all lights on trees and decorations when you go to bed or leave the house.

## **Security Management for the Holidays**

**by E. Floyd Phelps, CPP**

The holiday season brings out the kid in all of us -- that includes Security Directors. Things that they preach at work are often forgotten when the holidays come into view. If you don't believe me, drive by a security manager's house during this time of year and watch him installing holiday lights on the roof of his home. I can hear him now, "I don't need no stinking fall protection!"

Watch this company executive, responsible for the safety of thousands of employees, climb the huge tree in the front yard carrying strings of lights. Of course, he preformed a stress test on that small limb he is beginning to traverse so he would know if it would hold his weight.

Better yet – as he heads up the folding ladder that has been a family relic, the ladder begins to sway back and forth as he climbs. It's at rung five that he learns that his many years of Thanksgiving dinners has placed his weight far beyond the rickety stepladder's capability.

Pre-planning has always been his strong suit. There he is on top of the roof with 14 strings of lights that he has not tested to see that they work or how many are burned out.

He has made it up on to the roof with the lights. He throws the bundle of tangled light strings onto the steep sloped surface of the roof. Although it doesn't register, he watches as the lights slowly slide down the pitch. He grabs the roof and pulls himself from the ladder to the roof and, in doing so pushes the ladder over and it goes falling to the ground. He yells for his wife. That when he remembers that she has gone to the mall shopping. TRAPPED! Where is that contingency plan?

Accidents never happen during the holidays – in a roasted pig's eye.

## Would You Like to Join the Council?

by E. Floyd Phelps, CPP

ASIS International has 31 Councils that represent specific disciplines. At the beginning of each year, most of the Councils are looking for new members. The Fire and Life Safety Council is no exception. At the first of the year, we will have three openings for council members.

Our Council is currently trying to build a team of dedicated individuals who are willing to commit both time and effort to our Council -- individuals who will provide ideas, procedures, education and current trends to the entire ASIS International membership.

Being a council member requires some commitments to participate.

The Council currently has two planning meetings each year. The first is in January, and the second in September in conjunction with the ASIS Annual Seminar & Exhibits.

In addition, there are four conference calls, one in each quarter, to discuss current needs, new issues, pending council business, and to plan for the current year and upcoming years.

Each council member is expected to have the commitment of their employer that will allow them to attend meetings and participate in conference calls.

In addition, members are expected to serve on one of the many committees of the council. We encourage members to write articles and book reviews for *Security Management Magazine* and submit session proposals for the ASIS Annual Seminar & Exhibits.

Our current goals involve giving formal talks at each council member's local ASIS Chapter meeting to promote the councils and fire & life safety, to volunteer to serve as a moderator for educational sessions at the ASIS Annual Seminar & Exhibits, to volunteer to review proposed sessions for the Annual Seminar & Exhibits to help select sound programming, to produce articles for the Council's Quarterly Newsletter, to compile a list of Fire Safety Organizations in the United States and Internationally, and to recruit members both domestically and internationally. Naturally, each member will not be expected to complete all of these Council goals but if each member is active, we will achieve the goals as a team.

To this end, we are actively searching for ASIS members who are willing to participate in this endeavor as members of the Council, preferably individuals who administer a successful safety and fire safety program.

Our membership search includes international members who can serve as active members.

Those interested in becoming a member or have questions about Fire & Life Safety Council membership, contact Scott R. Ganes, CPP at

[scott@ganesecuritysolutions.com](mailto:scott@ganesecuritysolutions.com) or Membership Chairman, William A. Minear, II,  
CPP, PPS at [william.a.minear@us.army.mil](mailto:william.a.minear@us.army.mil)



1625 Prince Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314-2818  
USA  
703-518-1447  
Fax: 703-518-1517  
Email: [councils@asisonline.org](mailto:councils@asisonline.org)