

## Holiday Season Safety

**Decorations:** Wear gloves while decorating with spun glass "angel hair." It can irritate your eyes and skin. A common substitute is non-flammable cotton. Both angel hair and cotton snow are flame retardant when used alone. However, if artificial snow is sprayed onto them, the dried combination will burn rapidly. When spraying artificial snow on windows or other surfaces, be sure to follow directions carefully. These sprays can irritate your lungs if you inhale them.

**Fireplace:** You should not try to burn evergreens or wreaths in the fireplace or in a wood stove to dispose of them. They are likely to flare out of control and send flames and smoke into the room. Also, do not burn wrapping paper in the fireplace because it often contains metallic materials which can be toxic if burned.

**Candles:** Never use lighted candles near trees, boughs, curtains/drapes, or with any potentially flammable item.

**Toys and Gifts:** Be especially careful when you choose toys for infants or small children. Be sure anything you give them is too big to get caught in the throat, nose or ears. Avoid toys with small parts that can be pulled or broken off. If you are giving toys to several children in one family, consider their age differences and the chances that younger children will want to play with older kids' toys.

**Older adults:** Select gifts for older adults that are not heavy or awkward to handle. For persons with arthritis, make sure the gift does not require assembly and can be easily opened and closed. Choose books with large type for anyone with vision impairment.

**Plants:** Small children may think that holiday plants look good enough to eat.

But many plants can cause severe stomach problems. Plants to watch out for include: mistletoe, holly berries, Jerusalem cherry, and amaryllis. Keep all of these plants out of children's reach.

**Food and Cooking:** The holidays often mean preparing large meals for family and friends. Wash hands, utensils, sink, and anything else that has come in contact with raw poultry. Keep in mind that a stuffed bird takes longer to cook. For questions concerning holiday turkey preparation and cooking call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-800-535-4555. Refrigerate or freeze leftovers in covered shallow containers (less than two inches deep) within two hours after cooking. Date the leftovers for future use.

**Alcohol, Parties and Driving:** Being a smart party host or guest should include being sensible about alcoholic drinks. More than half of all traffic fatalities are alcohol-related. Use designated drivers, people who do not drink, to drive other guests home after a holiday party.

**Stress:** The holiday season is one of the most stressful times of the year. You can't avoid stress completely, but you can give yourself some relief. Allow enough time to shop rather than hurry through stores and parking lots. Only plan to do a reasonable number of errands. When shopping, make several trips out to the car to drop off packages rather than trying to carry too many

items. Take time out for yourself. Relax, read, or enjoy your favorite hobby at your own pace.

—THE NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL

*Before the ice is in the pools,  
Before the skaters go,*

*Or any cheek at nightfall  
Is tarnished by the snow,*

*Before the fields have finished,  
Before the Christmas tree,*

*Wonder upon wonder  
Will arrive to me! — EMILY DICKENSON*

*Blessed is the  
season which  
engages the  
whole world in a  
conspiracy of  
love.*

—HAMILTON WRIGHT MABIE

*The holiest of  
holidays are  
those—  
Kept by ourselves  
in silence and  
apart; The secret  
anniversaries of  
the heart. - HENRY  
WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW*

Happy Holidays!



from HBA

*Remember this December,  
that love weighs more than gold!*

- JOSEPHINE DODGE DASKAM BACON

## Budget Now for the Holidays to Avoid Debt Later



“He’s makin’ his list, checkin’ it twice . . .” is great advice for all of us. U.S. consumers are expected to spend approximately \$457.4 billion this year on Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa according to the National Retail Federation. By making a holiday shopping list, planning ahead, creating a budget, and shopping for bargains you can avoid a stocking full of post holiday credit card bills.

### Tips For Creating Your Holiday Spending Plan

- Create a list of each person you plan to give a gift to, how much you plan to spend and what type of gift you plan to buy for each person. Then stick to it.
- Look at what you spent last year and ask yourself if you overspent, or if your holiday spending was reasonable. Make sure you include the cost of any holiday travel, extra food, decorations, cards, postage, etc. If it relates to the holidays and you spend money on it, you need to add it into your spending plan for this year.
- Try to pay cash for holiday gifts. If you can’t do that, only charge what you can afford to pay back within a month or two, experts say.
- Start shopping now. This gives you time to find bargains and sales and to comparison shop for the bigger ticket items.
- The best gifts don’t cost you any money, just some of your time. Offer to babysit for friends or relatives with small children, offer to help an older relative clean or take them to run some special errands. Be creative with your gift giving, and don’t focus solely on what you can buy in a store. Handmade items or your time is often the most cherished gift you can give.

— FROM NANCE KELLY, ABOUT.COM

## Spending Time with Your In-Laws

For many couples, spending holidays or other special life-cycle events with in-laws and other extended family members creates hassles and marital stress.

### Alternatives to Consider

- Plan long-distance family visits on days other than holidays.
- Take a trip or a cruise during the holidays. It’s okay to spend this time alone together, or just with your own children.
- Make reservations to stay at a nearby hotel when visiting relatives.
- It gives you all “time out” when needed, gives you more quality time with family members, and lessens stress on everybody.
- Having your own accommodations is also beneficial if you are traveling with a pet, have allergies, desire your own bathroom, want more privacy, or just want a break from your relatives now and then during the visit.
- Create a family savings account for family reunions or holiday get-togethers that enables any member of the family to contribute to the fund. Agree that any member of the family who needs financial help to travel to the family gathering can use some of the funds in the account.

Consider choosing a locale (not your home) once a year where your extended family can visit you. Make sure the time you choose doesn’t interfere with any of the holidays.

When spending time with extended family, whether it be at their home or in your own home, make sure you communicate expectations and understand any boundaries that either they or you have set.

— FROM SHERI & BOB STRITOF, YOUR GUIDE TO MARRIAGE.

## Holiday Gift Craft Project

### Silhouettes

#### Materials Needed:

- Paper
- Flashlight
- Pen, Pencil, or Marker

#### Instructions:

Tape a large piece of paper to the wall. Have the child stand or sit sideways next to the paper. Darken the room and shine the flashlight on them so their profile is shadowed on the paper. Trace the shadow.

Cut out the profile and mount it on contrasting piece of paper.

This looks great with the profile cut out of black paper and mounted on white paper or vice versa.

