

# Rochester Fire Department Monthly Media Blast



## December 2019

- **Avoiding Holiday Mishaps:** The holidays are a time for gathering with friends and family around firesides and well-lit trees. But they also increase the risk of fire danger due to the materials that are popular at this time of year. For example, more than a third of holiday decoration fires are started by candles. And almost half of decoration fires occur because they are placed too close to a heat source. When it comes to Christmas tree fires, one in three are caused by electrical problems. RFD reminds everyone to be extremely careful about using holiday lights, candles, and other heat sources near trees and flammable holiday materials. Indoor tree fires can also grow and spread very quickly, so people should evacuate their residence immediately, attempting to close doors behind them before calling 911 from outside the home.



- **Clear Hydrants of Snow:** As the snow starts to pile up, RFD would like to urge everyone to clear the snow from around the fire hydrants on their streets while shoveling driveways and sidewalks. We ask that everyone clear snow all the way to the ground in a 3-foot radius around the entire hydrant, so it is easily accessible in case of a fire. Fire engines carry enough water to get through the first 2-3 minutes of a fire, making hydrant water essential at residential structure fires. Fires can double in size every 60 seconds, and if firefighters must spend precious minutes locating and digging out hydrants, a bad situation can quickly become much worse.



- **Ladder Dangers:** This is the time of year when people start using ladders to put up holiday lights or clear snow from roofs. But ladders can be dangerous and cause severe injury or death if used improperly. According to the Consumer Safety Product Commission, about 90,000 ladder-related injuries are reported every year. There are several tips people should keep in mind when using ladders around the home, including:



- Place the ladder on a stable surface.
- Always face the ladder and maintain 3 points of contact at all times.
- Secure the base of the ladder to an anchor, or have another person foot the ladder.
- Avoid electrical hazards and other overhead obstructions.
- Do not lean off a ladder to reach something. Climb down and reposition the ladder closer to the object.
- When using adjustable ladders, make sure all pawls, locks, and pins are completely secure before climbing.
- Never work with your feet on the top two rungs of the ladder.

## **Training Calendar**

- **High School Students Search & Rescue:** About 20 high school students enrolled in this year's inaugural RFD-led Firefighter classes will get their first chance to partake in search and rescue training on Saturday, Dec. 7. The media is welcome to attend at 1 p.m. at the Regional Public Safety Training Center (located on 50<sup>th</sup> St SE, east of St. Bridget's Rd.) The high school program is a blend of online and hands-on courses that was designed by RFD in collaboration with Rochester Public Schools. The goal of the program is to provide an opportunity for local students to explore the career of firefighting, all while getting the experience they need to gain Minnesota state certifications in Firefighter 1, Firefighter 2, and Hazardous Materials Operations, which are often required to test for career fire departments. **If you are interested in covering the training, please contact us ahead of time at the email address below.**

**For further information or for RFD media availability, please email us at [FirePublicRelations@rochestermn.gov](mailto:FirePublicRelations@rochestermn.gov)**