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CHRISTMAS SAFETY

Statistics show that at times when we are exposed to increased stress, unusual routine and distractions there is an increase in the number of accidents in the home. Of all the times in the year when all three factors come together to impact on our daily life the Christmas period must surely be the prime time.

A few simple safety steps which need only take a few extra seconds can help you enjoy a safe and happy Christmas.

Initial preparations normally involve hanging decorations and dressing the Christmas tree.

It is essential to use proper step ladders when putting up decorations in positions which would normally require you to stretch or climb precariously on to the edge of a chair and it is vital that you do not overreach – a few seconds spent moving the step ladders could prevent a painful fall.

Care should be taken not to overload sockets with Christmas tree lights and other extra electrical items.

On Christmas Day itself discarded wrapping represents a fire hazard and the, hopefully, many presents which are scattered around can be a tripping hazard or if they are toys they can pose a variety of safety problems if they fall into the hands of a child who is younger than the age group for which the toy is designed.

The easiest way to deal with these hazards is to tidy up the items and put them in a safer location where the risks of accidents occurring will be reduced.

Similarly Christmas Day is the time of greatest activity in the kitchen and a little extra effort and organisation - in keeping worktops and cookers tidy with hot, heavy or sharp objects well back from the edges or with handles turned in so that they do not overhang - will reduce the risks of any accidents.



Electrical Safety First offers the following guidance for Christmas:

- Even Christmas lights need a break – switch all lights off when you aren't there to enjoy them
- Check that lights aren't damaged or broken before use and look out for loose wires
- Use LED Christmas lights instead of traditional filament lighting.
- As LED lights run at a lower voltage, they use energy more efficiently and there is less risk of electric shock
- Or get Christmas lights with a low voltage transformer, so that they operate at a lower and safer voltage (usually 12 – 24 volts)
- Make sure you know where your fuse box is so you can reach it quickly in an emergency
- Make sure all your outdoor lighting is specifically designed for outdoor use and connected through an RCD protected socket
- (An RCD is a potentially life-saving device, which disconnects the electricity or 'load' if the current is imbalanced – which can result in an electric shock or electrocution.)

KEEP CAPS FROM KIDS

The detergent industry has launched a campaign to raise parental awareness of the need to keep detergent capsules out of reach of babies and small children. Children can mistake liquid tabs for sweets, due to their bright colours and jelly-like texture. Liquid tabs contain alkaline chemicals which if ingested can cause immediate chemical burns, and breathing problems as the airway starts to swell rapidly.



However, they can cause serious injuries if ingested. During the year 2010 to 2011, the Royal Hospital for Sick Children at Yorkhill treated 18 children for ingesting liquid tabs, nine of whom had to be admitted for treatment. Getting children affected to hospital quickly is imperative, as the consequences could potentially be fatal.

The newly-live [Keep Caps from Kids website](#), developed by A.I.S.E., the International Association for Soaps, Detergents and Maintenance Products, features a short video and key messages for consumers. The campaign will run across 28 member states and be promoted to parents via social media.

The website launch is part of a wider industry agenda to improve packaging, monitor incidents of exposure to the dangers of detergent capsules and raise public awareness of the issue. The initiative follows concerns raised by clinicians about the increasing numbers of children being exposed to the dangers of liquid tabs.

ELECTRIC BLANKET UPDATE

Electric blanket testing in Fife this year revealed a high number of safety failures.

22 events were held in towns across Fife. 473 blankets were tested in total. 246 passed the test, with 228 (48%) considered to be unsafe.

Geoff Bates, Service Manager expresses his concern, "The results show that people are continuing to risk their safety by using old, unsafe blankets. Trading Standards has run blanket testing projects since 2004, but we see blankets estimated to be around 40 years old brought for testing, that are still in use. This represents a serious safety hazard.

Geoff continues, "All the blankets that failed had the potential to cause serious injury or even a house fire. Acting on our advice, all these householders removed the unsafe blankets from their house which is a great bonus for the safety of the Fife community".



The project is a joint initiative by Economy, Planning & Employability Services, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service and Fife Community Safety Partnership. Funding from Electrical Safety First and Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE) allowed us to issue a limited number of replacement blankets free of charge.

Blankets that fail are handed over to a textile recycling company. They are cleaned, have the elements stripped out and either re-used as a normal blanket or shredded for filling purposes.

For further information: www.fifedirect.org.uk/electricblankets

DEATHS AND INJURIES REDUCED ON SCOTTISH ROADS

The number of people killed and injured on Scotland's roads fell by 10% last year, according to official statistics. With 11,498 road casualties reported to police in 2013, this was the lowest level since records began. The figures released by Transport Scotland showed an increase in recorded fatalities for car drivers, cyclists and motorcyclists. The overall number of fatalities fell by 3% to 172.



The casualty total for pedestrians was down 12%, motorcycle casualties were down 11%, and there was a 3% fall in cyclist casualties. The number of injuries sustained by casualties were also down with the number of serious injuries falling by 16% to 1,672, and the number of people slightly injured down 9% to 9,654.

On target

The Scottish Road Safety Framework, launched in June 2009, set out specific targets for reducing the number of casualties on Scotland's roads by 2020.

They included

- a 40% reduction in the number of people killed in road traffic accidents,
- a 50% reduction in the number of children killed.

Compared with the numbers recorded during the period 2004-2008 - the starting point chosen for the targets - the 2013 figures have already more than met the target, with the number of children killed over the last three years down by 60%. The number of overall fatalities during 2013 also passed the 40% reduction target by 1%. The incident rate of serious injuries among adults and children remains short of the target level. The framework sought a 55% reduction in the number of people seriously injured, and a 65% reduction in the number of children seriously injured by 2020. The current reductions stand at 36% and 56% respectively, compared to the 2004-2008 starting point.

FESTIVE SAFETY - 24 tips from Police Scotland

As part of Police Scotland's festive campaign they advise the following steps to keep you safe this Christmas:

- If you are going out shopping, visiting or partying let someone know where you are going and when you will be home.
- Look confident. Be alert, walk tall and be aware of your surroundings. Good posture is an aid to self protection.
- Use well lit populated routes for any journey whether on foot or in a car. Think safety in numbers!
- Whenever you are out and your plans change, make sure you let someone know.
- Never assume your fears are unfounded and that people are what they seem. People are more likely to be harmed by people they know.
- Don't leave personal belongings and presents in view within your car. Always place them in the boot out of sight.
- Leave a light on or use light timers when you are not home to give the impression that someone is home when you are out.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash with you when out and about. Be cautious of counting money in view of others.
- Ensure any bags are fastened and facing in to your body. If someone grabs your bag let it go. Avoid wearing a shoulder strap across your body.
- On a bus sit near the driver and in an aisle seat whenever possible. On trains try and avoid sitting in an empty carriage.
- If possible book your taxi in advance for the journey home. Save trusted taxi numbers in your phone. Always sit in the back seat of a taxi.
- Festive parties! Where possible arrive at the venue with your friends. Look out for each other and ensure that everyone leaves safely.
- Only use cash machines in well lit areas. Always shield your pin and remove cash as soon as possible putting it away safely.
- Avoid placing expensive presents under your Christmas tree prior to Christmas Eve.
- Be wary of accepting drinks from strangers. Never leave your drink unattended. If you are offered a drink ensure that you watch it being prepared.
- Make sure that your phone is fully charged prior to going out. Ensure that it is password/passcode protected.
- Be aware of cold callers offering home improvement work or selling goods on the doorstep. It's OK to say NO.
- In winter, check your vehicle is roadworthy. Ensure that fluid levels are correct and that tyres and lights are in good working order.
- Know your limits and if you choose to drink alcohol drink at your own pace.
- Make sure that you fit good quality locks to your shed and keep the contents out of view. Make sure it's locked at all times.
- Always keep windows and doors locked and leave lights on when not at home. Opportunist thieves may try doors at random to see if they are unlocked.
- Be aware who is listening to your conversations. Don't give away personal information such as addresses or phone numbers.
- Keep a record of serial numbers and the make and model of any high-value presents. Take a photograph and note any distinguishing features and designs.
- Keep updated with internet safety in Fife by following Fife Community Safety Partnership.

Like us at www.facebook.com/fifecommunitysafety

follow us at www.twitter.com/safeinfife

BUTTON BATTERIES



A stark warning has been issued by a paediatric consultant following the deaths of two children in Greater Manchester who had swallowed button batteries.

Dr Kate Parkins, a consultant at Central Manchester University Hospitals Trust added that, in the last 18 months, there have been a further five children who have suffered 'life-changing' injuries.

The lithium batteries are common in many homes, and are found in many items including smartphones, key cards, children's games, watches, toys and even children's books.

If swallowed, the batteries can cause severe internal bleeding which is very difficult to treat.

Quoted in an article on the [BBC website](#), Dr Parkins explained:

"It's not what's inside the battery - the battery sets up an electrical current which causes a build-up of sodium hydroxide which is caustic soda. That causes a burn through the oesophagus, the feeding tube, and that can then burn through into major blood vessels and that's why the bleeding is then pretty much impossible to control and stop."

Because the batteries are small and round they are a huge risk to babies and toddlers. Even older children, who may mistake the batteries for sweets, are at risk. The oldest child treated in Manchester was six. But because parents aren't aware of the dangers posed by button batteries, they don't think to **put them out of children's reach**.

NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES REVIEW

The Scottish Government has published an evidence review of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) which summarises the key information to date. Information on Scotland is presented in the context of UK and international evidence and the report is structured around the themes of:

- demand/prevalence of use
- supply
- impact/harms
- responses (enforcement, prevention, and treatment)
- evidence gaps



The purpose of the report is to pull together what we know about NPS and to serve as a basis for future policy and analytical work in this area. A group has been established to take stock of research being carried out on NPS across Scotland, to discuss the gaps identified in the evidence base on NPS and to consider how these gaps should be addressed.

Alcohol and Drugs Partnerships have a clear responsibility for tackling drug use and promoting recovery. Over the last year, tackling and understanding the dangers and implications to services of NPS has been a priority for

ADPs. There is a problem solving partnership in place to tackle the availability of NPS in Fife with membership from Fife Alcohol & Drug Partnership, Police Scotland, Fife Council Trading Standards, Clued Up Project and Fife Safer Communities Committee. Fife Alcohol & Drug Partnership commission a range of prevention, protection and recovery services that operate on a Fife wide basis. This includes information services and support for people affected by someone else's substance use.

For more information, including where to get help, visit:

www.fifedirect.org.uk/fifeadp

Alcohol.DrugInfo@fife.gov.uk

REDUCED DRINK DRIVE LIMIT IN SCOTLAND

Senior Police Scotland officers warn an extra 35 drivers a week across Scotland could lose their license over the festive period, following the proposed introduction of new drink drive limits.

The warning comes ahead of proposed changes to the levels of alcohol permitted with changes due to take effect from December 5th. A public information campaign will be launched ahead of the changes which will also be followed by Police Scotland's festive drink drive campaign.

Chief Superintendent Iain Murray, head of roads policing, said:
"Drink driving causes significant impact on families and our local communities not just at Christmas but throughout the year and the proposed changes send a clear message that there is no safe alcohol limit for drivers.

"We know from our figures that we can anticipate an extra 35 drivers a week losing their license over the festive period following the changes to the limit. Our advice to all drivers is don't risk it. Even at the new levels you will still be three times more likely to die in a collision than without any alcohol at all."



Since 1 April this year, more than 3,317 people have been caught driving while under the influence of drink or drugs. Last Christmas, 434 drivers were caught driving while under the influence of drink and over a hundred more received warnings.

Causing death by careless driving whilst under the influence of drink and/or drugs will result in a minimum 2 year driving ban and up to 14 years in prison with an unlimited fine.

A marketing campaign to raise awareness of the new lower limit will be launched - the new lower limit will take effect from 5 December 2014 in line with Police Scotland's Drink Drug Drive Campaign.

CANDLE SAFETY



Last year in Scotland there were 5,830 house fires where 41 people died and a further 1,164 were injured as a result of unsafe candles. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service hold many campaigns in the aim to reduce this number. Further information on these campaigns can be found at:

www.firescotland.gov.uk/your-safety/festive-safety/the-campaign.aspx

Follow the rules below to reduce the chances of fire starting in your home.

- **Always keep a burning candle within sight.** Extinguish all candles when leaving a room or before going to sleep. Be sure the wick ember is no longer glowing.
- **Never burn a candle on or near anything that can catch fire.** Keep burning candles away from furniture, curtains, bedding, carpets, books, paper, flammable decorations, etc.
- **Keep burning candles out of the reach of children and pets.**
- **Always use a candle-holder specifically designed for candle use.** The holder should be heat resistant, sturdy, and large enough to contain any drips or melted wax.
- **Be sure the candle-holder is placed on a stable, heat-resistant surface.** This can help prevent heat damage to underlying surfaces and prevent glass containers from breaking.
- **Keep burning candles away from drafts, vents, ceiling fans and air currents.** This will help prevent rapid, uneven burning, and avoid flame flare-ups and sooting. Drafts can also blow nearby lightweight items into the flame where they could catch fire.
- **Always burn candles in a well-ventilated room.** Don't burn too many candles in a small room or in a "tight" home where air exchange is limited.
- **Don't burn a candle all the way down.** Extinguish the flame if it comes too close to the holder or container. For a margin of safety, discontinue burning a candle when 2 inches of wax remains or ½ inch if in a container.
- **Never touch or move a burning candle or container candle when the wax is liquid.**
- **Never use a knife or sharp object to remove wax drippings from a glass holder.** It might scratch, weaken, or cause the glass to break upon subsequent use.
- **Place burning candles at least three inches apart from one another.** This helps ensure they don't melt one another, or create their own drafts to cause improper burning.
- **Never extinguish candles with water.** The water can cause the hot wax to splatter and might cause a glass container to break.
- **Be very careful if using candles during a power cut.** Torches and other battery-powered lights are safer sources of light during a power failure.
- **Never use a candle as a night light.**

SAFE DRIVE STAY ALIVE – Celebrating 12 Years



The multi-award winning Safe Drive Stay Alive show returned in November for its 12th year of operation. A new film was created for 2014's roadshow, which along with live action segments highlighted the dangers faced by new and young drivers, towards reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured on Fife's roads.

Over 4500 young people from Schools and Colleges attended the event, which brought partners together: Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Fife Community Safety Partnership, Police Scotland, NHS Fife, Scottish Ambulance Service and Fife Council.

Graham Barclay, SFRS Partnership Prevention Officer for Fife, and compere of the event, said: "We're very proud of Safe Drive Stay Alive and the way its messages resonate with young people. The roadshow

demonstrates what could happen when you are not in control of your surroundings, such as when you drive using a mobile phone or if you don't wear a seat belt.

"Practitioners from all emergency services explained their role in road traffic collisions, and we have local families who shared their experiences of the wide-ranging damage caused. It really provides the reality of what will happen if you are in a collision."

An evening show took place on Thursday 6th November at 7pm at the Rothes Halls in Glenrothes. Parents with children who are driving or learning to drive were encouraged to come along.

TRUSTED TRADER

Fife Trusted Trader is led by Fife Council Trading Standards. It's a membership scheme which uses an online directory of local trades who have made a commitment to treat their customers fairly.

Currently in its 4th year, the Scheme has a growing membership from the home improvements, other household related services and the motor trade.

Customers who employ a Trusted Trader are asked to complete a survey form, based on their experience. Before you employ a trader, you can search at fifedirect.org.uk/trustedtrader and check their feedback from previous customers, helping you to select the right trader for your needs.



Like us at facebook.com/fifets or follow us twitter.com/@FifeTS to keep up to date about the Trusted Trader scheme and other Trading Standards related issues.

PASS PLUS SCHEME



Build your driving confidence
Learn more driving skills
Spend more time with a driving instructor
There's no test at the end, and you may save on car insurance!

Register now:
roadsafety.education@fife.gov.uk
03451 555555 ext 402057



WINTER DRIVING

Driving in severe winter weather poses many challenges. Cars can get stuck in snowy conditions even on familiar roads, forcing the driver and passengers to spend the night on the roadside. Make sure that your vehicle is prepared for cold weather and if you have to head out in the snow and ice then follow our driving advice below.



Before you leave

Tyres: If possible, considering buying winter tyres, which are designed to grip the road better in icy, wet and snowy conditions. If this is not an option, ensure your standard tyres are inflated correctly and that you have a minimum of 3mm of tread on your tyres to cope with wet and slippery conditions.

Battery: In winter, the battery will run down quicker than in warmer weather. Where possible take a long journey to top it up.

Engine: Modern engines are more robust than older ones. All the same, depress the clutch when starting as this will reduce drag on the engine when starting, and preserve the battery.

Screenwash: Keep this topped up and use a proper additive at the right concentration to prevent it freezing.

Fuel: Keep your tank topped up - that way if you are caught out, you'll have enough fuel to make it home or run the engine to keep warm. However, it's essential to keep snow from blocking the exhaust as noxious fumes can leak into the vehicle.

Windows: Clear all snow and ice from the windscreen, windows and the roof of the car before driving off.

Locks: A squirt of WD-40 will help prevent your door locks freezing up.

Warm clothing: Your car may be warm on the inside but if you have to step outside, you could be in trouble if you have not got any warm clothing with you.

Always pack the following: warm coat, hat, gloves, sturdy boots, a blanket to keep you warm if you get stuck. Take some food, chocolate, biscuits, water and a hot drink if you can. Always carry a fully charged mobile, and some old bits of carpet, or cat litter, to put under the tyres when stuck and a shovel to clear snow.

Driving Tips

Snow and Ice:

Gentle manoeuvres are the key to safe driving in these conditions as stopping distances can be up to 10 times longer. Pull away in second gear, easing your foot off the clutch gently to avoid wheel spin.

Up-hill – avoid having to stop part way up by waiting until it is clear of other cars or by leaving plenty of room to the car in front. Keep a constant speed, choosing the most suitable gear well in advance to avoid having to change down on the hill.

Down-hill - reduce your speed before the hill, use a low gear and try to avoid using the brakes. Leave as much room as possible between you and the car in front. If you have to use brakes then apply them gently. Release the brakes and de-clutch if the car skids.

If you get stuck, straighten the steering and clear the snow from the wheels. Put a sack or old rug in front of the driving wheels to give the tyres some grip. Once on the move again, try not to stop until you reach firmer ground. If you do encounter a skid, steer gently into it - for example, if the rear of the car is sliding to the right, steer to the right. Do not take your hands off the steering wheel or stamp your foot on the brakes

Police Scotland has produced a short video showing drivers how to make simple checks on their vehicles, and giving advice on safe winter driving. The film features sergeant Debbie Allan and constable Fraser Cameron from the Police Scotland Road Policing Unit. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OTINPHGD9DA>

CHILD SAFETY CONFERENCE

RoSPA have announced the date for their 2015 seminar entitled: Child Safety – A Sharing to be held on: February 17th 2015, Radisson Blu Hotel, Glasgow.

This one-day conference on the topic of Child Safety will highlight examples of recent and ongoing initiatives in Scotland designed to prevent unintentional injuries to children. Information will be shared about how practitioners in a variety of settings can help stop accidents from happening to children in the home, on the roads and in or near water. This event will be of interest to anyone whose role includes the safety, care and education of children and includes those who work in health, education, childcare and community safety – "it's everyone's responsibility".

RoSPA will work with a range of partners to host this third annual conference in Scotland on the topic of child safety. Delegates will have the opportunity to discuss the barriers and facilitators to adopting initiatives in their own areas as well as hearing from a selection of speakers who have either first hand experience of carrying out safety projects or are in an influencing position that can make a practical difference to child safety. The event will contribute to the Scottish Government's outcomes by providing a more resilient workforce able to ensure that 'children have the best start in life', that 'children live longer, healthier lives' and, 'we live our lives free from crime, disorder and danger'. The aim of this event is to share a cross topic understanding of unintentional injuries issues affecting children up to and including primary school age and to share experiences of initiatives designed to reduce the frequency and severity of accidents involving children in Scotland.

Thanks to funding from a variety of sources, all places, including refreshments, will be provided free of charge. For further information and a booking form please contact Jennifer Henderson at childsafetyscotland@rospa.com

Booking forms to be returned by 11th January 2015.

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT DEBATE ON CHILD SAFETY

On 13th November, members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) acknowledged the importance of home safety equipment fitting schemes in a parliamentary debate. The debate recognised that young children are at risk of serious accidents in the home and can be protected with vital information and the use of some simple equipment. Please have a look at this link to see what was addressed

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28862.aspx?r=9622&i=87433>

DIARY DATES FOR 2015

17th February

Child Safety Conference - Glasgow

1st – 7th June

Child Safety Week

FIFE CARES

Fife Cares is part of the Fife Community Safety Partnership delivering expert home safety and security advice free of charge to vulnerable residents of Fife. We provide advice to parents and guardians of children under 5 years of age and vulnerable adults as our most at risk community groups. We can conduct home safety visits and, with the help of our partners in Police Scotland, we can provide home security visits. Our advice is always

relevant and up to date, based on the best we can get from RoSPA - Scotland, The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and Police Scotland.

HOW TO CONTACT US

To apply for a Fife Cares Home Safety or Security check, you can either phone the contact centre on 01383 441177 or follow the following procedure and do it online:

Log on to www.fifedirect.org.uk

Press **Do it online** tab at the top of the home page.

Press **Request** button

In the **Request It** box click **Fife Cares Visit – Request Form**

Press **Go to form**, select visit type

and follow the form entering the necessary details from there.

For Road Safety information or advice on child car seats, please contact Gillian Kelly, Road Safety Organiser on **03451 55555 ext. 402057** or email roadsafety.education@fife.gov.uk

Anyone can arrange a free home fire safety visit by calling the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service Free phone number **0800 0731 999** or by contacting their local fire station.

RESOURCES/ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Child Accident Prevention Trust](#)

[Child Safety Scotland](#)

[Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents](#)

[Scottish Burned Children's Club](#)

FACEBOOK AND TWITTER

For more information on all aspects of Community Safety please like our Facebook page:

 www.facebook.com/fifecommunitysafety

or follow us on twitter:

 www.twitter.com/safeinfife

Making Fife's
Communities Safer

