



American Red Cross of Central MA
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News Release
NEWS RELEASE

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American Red Cross of Central MA Provides Assistance
Following Two Alarm Fire
Urges Residents to Follow Holiday Safety Guidelines

Worcester, MA, December 22, 2011— Red Cross volunteers responded to a two alarm fire in Winchendon this morning, located at 4 Front Street. The home was comprised of 2 apartments; one was unoccupied, the other housed five adults.

Assistance from the Red Cross was given to the five victims in the form of clothing and temporary housing. An official cause of the fire is being investigated and is currently unknown. Since July 1st, volunteers from the Central MA Chapter have responded to 46 disasters and fires.

In light of several house fires this month, the Red Cross strongly urges residents to adhere to the following safety tips:

- Place Christmas trees, candles, and other holiday decorations at least three feet away from heat sources like fireplaces, portable heaters, radiators, heat vents and candles.
- Purchase flame retardant metallic or artificial trees. If you purchase a real tree, make sure that it has fresh, green needles that aren't easily broken. Keep live trees as moist as possible by giving them plenty of water.
- Make sure that light strings and other holiday decorations are in good condition. Do not use anything with frayed electrical cords and always follow the manufacturer's instructions.

- Always unplug tree and holiday lights before leaving home or going to bed.
- Never use lit candles to decorate a tree. Always extinguish candles before leaving the room or going to bed.
- Use only sturdy tree stands designed not to tip over. Keep curious pets and children away from Christmas trees.
- Keep anything that can catch on fire—pot holders, oven mitts, wooden utensils, paper or plastic bags, food packaging, and towels or curtains—away from your stove top.
- Designate one person to walk around your home to make sure that all candles and smoking materials are properly extinguished after guests leave.
- Smoke alarms save lives. Install a smoke alarm near your kitchen, on each level of your home, near sleeping areas, and inside and outside bedrooms if you sleep with doors closed. Use the test button to check it each month. Replace all batteries at least once a year.
- Visit www.redcross.org/homefires for more information on how to keep your home fire safe during the holidays.

How you can help:

You can help people affected by disasters like winter storms, as well as countless crises at home and around the world, by making a donation to support American Red Cross Disaster Relief. Your gift enables the Red Cross to prepare for and provide shelter, food, emotional support and other assistance in response to disasters. Visit www.redcrosscw.com or call 1-800-RED-CROSS. Contributions may also be sent to the American Red Cross, 2000 Century Drive, Worcester, MA 01606.

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