



On behalf of all members of the Piers Island Volunteer Fire Department, Pauline and I would like to wish each one of you a very Merry Christmas and Happy Holiday Season. This is such a fortunate time of the year as we can spend time with our families and friends. We truly know how lucky we are; there is so much for us to be thankful. This year many of us lost loved ones too soon but we also had the blessing of new babies coming into our lives. Life has a way of balancing itself out regardless of what we want.



Safety is always a concern of fire departments at this time of year. Following are a few brief reminders which just might prevent a tragedy; please have a look and think about each one.

✚ Christmas wrappings – these burn with great intensity when tossed in a fireplace or stove. Moisture content is an important factor in burning; this is obvious in wood but in paper there is much less moisture content thus paper burns hotter and faster. Add to that the pigments colouring your Christmas wrappings and you have a very hot flame which can extend well up your chimney. A fire in your chimney can result as the creosote lining the chimney ignites. Inhaling smoke from burning wrappings is also a serious issue as the wrapping paper includes multiple toxins and chemicals. Simply put: don't burn the gift wrap.

✚ Chimney fires – if you want to avoid this at your house, have your chimney swept or cleaned once a year. And you should be burning wood that is seasoned and dry. It might be a few years old but if it is wet when you burn it, creosote will be produced.

✚ Christmas trees – it is very important that you keep your cut Christmas tree well watered as this increases the moisture content and prevents rapid ignition. Always place the tree in a stand that holds at least 2-3 litres of water and top it up daily. Be sure to keep the tree at least 3 feet away from any heat source like fireplaces, radiators, candles and heat vents. Turn the lights off if you leave the house and before you go to bed. This short video demonstrates the difference in how a tree burns if not properly watered: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNjO3wZDVIA#action=share>

✚ Holiday Entertaining – test your smoke alarms and keep children and pets away from lit candles. Always keep matches and lighters in a locked cabinet. Stay in the kitchen when cooking on the stovetop.

Best wishes to all Piers Islanders from the PIVFD.

Steve Cruise

Chief