

# Condominium Home Owners Association

A non-profit association serving strata owners since 1976

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## Condo Smarts

Headline: 'Tis the season to think twice, be careful and stay safe

Topic: Holiday warning

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At Christmas two phenomena occur: loss of common sense and a week with nothing to do. These often result in unnecessary insurance claims, property damage and loss of life and usually involve water and fire.

One eager Vancouver Island townhouse owner, for example, decided to smoke all of his summer catch to distribute as Christmas gifts. Good idea outside, but not a good idea in the garage which in a short time was engulfed in flames.

Then there was the fourth-floor apartment owner who decided to burn her very dry tree in the fireplace (which she hadn't used for five years), causing a chimney fire and over \$140,000 in smoke and water damage to four apartments.

Another apartment owner decided she could burn the wrapping paper in her open gas fire. Oops!

Let's not forget the owner who wanted to participate in the deep-fried-turkey craze on his back deck, except he didn't know you can't place a frozen turkey in boiling oil. When he did, he caused a fiery oil explosion and received serious injuries. Don't try this without competent supervision, a fire extinguisher and a good distance between you and any buildings.

We cannot leave out the number of owners who go to their ski cabins and condos over the holidays, turning the heat in their homes off when they leave to save money. The resulting freezing and then exploding pipes cost the insurance industry millions in the past year alone.

And finally, candles. The number of candle-fire-related incidents skyrockets during the holiday season. Candles belong in fire-proof containers and lamps, not on trees and should never be left unattended where they can tip over and torch a table full of paper decorations.

So before we receive your hundreds of letters, emails and calls from the Christmas disaster hangovers, think twice, be safe and ask yourself:

"What would Condo Smarts advise us to do?"  
Merry Christmas, Happy Hannuka, Season's Greetings and Happy Holidays.

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