

'Tis the season: Tips for keeping your home safe during the holiday season

Dean Ruhl
OSU Agriculture

Home fires are most common in the winter months, peaking in December and January, according to the National Fire Protection Association.

As the holiday season approaches — and with it colder weather, extravagantly decorated houses, and packed kitchens — Oklahoma State University Extension offers up tips to keep your house standing over the winter months.

It all starts with electricity

Overloaded outlets and loose cords are among the primary causes of this surge in home fires.

To avoid any issues, Scott Frazier, an associate professor of biosystems and agricultural engineering, and OSU Extension specialist for energy management, provides the following advice:

For holiday lights, single extension cords should not exceed 50 feet in length. Also, anything that exceeds the listed amperage could result in the cord becoming hot. Avoid overloading outlets; guidelines call for standard, two-receptacle outlets not to exceed 1,500 watts total. "Something like a small bedroom heater, that would typically be 1,100 watts," Frazier said. "If you're plugging more into that outlet with two receptacles on it, better be small."

Frazier also said not to tuck extension cords under carpets and rugs, despite the eyecore they can be. It not only creates a tripping hazard in the house, but if the cord is frayed, it can result in a rig catching on fire.

Be cautious about linking three or more

strands of lights together. The more lines linked together, the higher the resistance becomes, which can lead to the cords heating up. If wrapped around a real tree, which dries out over time, there is a risk of fire.

Outdoor lights and extension cords are specifically designed to withstand the weather and winter elements, so be aware of the difference between indoor and outdoor options, Frazier said. Also, pay attention to ensure wiring is not running through puddles of water on the ground.

Fire comes next

As temperatures drop, people will start using heaters and fireplaces for the first time in months. Before doing so, always check smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors.

"It's an easy thing to do," Frazier said. "There's really no excuse not to do it."

At a minimum, detectors and fire extinguishers should be placed on every floor in a house, including basements. Frazier recommends that chimneys and fireplaces be inspected annually due to the potential creosote buildup that can occur.

Examine the pressure gauge and dates on the exterior of fire extinguishers to ensure they are properly functioning.

"If it's 20 years old, even if the gauge shows it is OK, go get a new one," Frazier said.

Keep extinguishers in easily accessible areas, where a fire is unlikely to occur. Spots like a garage, coat closet, or at the top of stairs are good. Frazier also recommends stashing one in your car. It may save you or someone else from a fire you come upon.

Holidays lend themselves to cooking



Mitchell Alcala, OSU Agriculture
Home fires are most common in the winter months, peaking in December and January.

larger meals than most are accustomed to. To avoid any fire hazards, Frazier advised preparing as much as possible beforehand and keeping the kitchen organized.

Avoid letting unnecessary occupants into the kitchen, like pets and children, unless they have a specific role. Hold off on consuming any alcoholic beverages until after the cooking is completed.

"It's mostly scalding and fire hazards," Frazier said. "Watch out for pan handles hanging over the edges of stoves and counters."

Every Thanksgiving, videos of people frying turkeys on social media go viral.

"I've seen someone put a frozen turkey in the turkey fryer, and I don't know what the equivalent explosive power would be, but it was spectacular," Frazier said.

When frying a turkey, always do it outside and have a fire extinguisher nearby in case anything goes wrong. A common mistake is overfilling the vat with peanut oil, which will bubble over and open flames when a turkey is placed in it.

Fire safety blankets are a good option to

have around in kitchens and can be thrown onto grease fires to help contain them as a secondary option. They cannot replace a fire extinguisher, though, and you'd need an extinguisher in the event of a grease fire.

Other guidelines to follow for safety

Older decorations use incandescent lights that can have cracked or dry insulation.

Pull out the wiring and inspect it, inch by inch. "If it looks suspicious, throw it away," Frazier said.

Holiday candles should be placed on stable, heat-resistant surfaces, away from pets and children. Never leave it unattended and keep away from decorations that could easily catch on fire. Flameless candles are a great alternative.

Be aware of what table scraps are poisonous to pets. Mistletoe, holly berries, and Jerusalem cherries can be poisonous to children and pets. Even grapes can be a problem for dogs.

Avoid using furniture as a ladder. Make sure anything you stand on has at least three points of contact with the ground.

LEGALS

DISTRICT COURT OF DELAWARE COUNTY STATE OF OKLAHOMA

THE SEQUOYAH LEWIS AND MARY ELIZABETH ROGERS FAMILY REVOCABLE LIVING TRUST DATED MAY 1, 2003, Plaintiff,

v.

THE HEIRS, EXECUTORS, ADMINISTRATORS, TRUSTEES, DEVISEES AND ASSIGNS IMMEDIATE AND REMOTE, WHETHER KNOWN OR UNKNOWN OF DAVID H. MCLENNAN, DECEASED, Defendants.

No. CJ-2025-189 NOTICE OF SHERIFF'S SALE

Notice is hereby given that on the 22nd day of December, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. at the Courthouse in Jay, Delaware County, Oklahoma, the undersigned Sheriff of said County of Delaware will offer for sale at public auction the real estate of said, at public auction, to the highest and best bidder, with appraisement, that certain real property situated in Delaware County, Oklahoma, described as follows:

Lot 6, Block 1, Price Acres, Addition to the Town of Jay, Oklahoma, according to the recorded plat thereof, Delaware County, Oklahoma.

subject to taxes and tax sales, said property being duly appraised at a value of \$43,000.

Sale will be made pursuant to an Order of Sale issued upon a Judgment entered in the District Court of Delaware County, Oklahoma, in Case No. CJ-2025-189 in favor of Plaintiff The Sequoyah Lewis and Mary Elizabeth Rogers Family Revocable Trust dated May 1, 2003 against the heirs, executors, administrators, trustees, devisees and assigns immediate and remote, whether known or unknown of David H. Mclellan, Deceased in personam and in rem for the sum of \$29,076.98 which includes principal, accrued interest, and late charge, plus costs and interest at the contract rate of five percent (5%) per annum beginning September 2, 2025 according for each day thereafter; and reasonable attorneys' fees to be determined by the Court and a further judgment finding that the Plaintiff's Contract lien is valid, subsisting and enforceable in the County and ordering that if said judgment be not paid, that a Special Execution issue from the office of the Court Clerk, directed to the Sheriff of Delaware County, commanding such Sheriff to levy

upon, advertise and sell said real property, with appraisement, as provided by law; and whereas, the Plaintiff, retaining what is due and the Plaintiff has requested a Special Execution and Order of Sale to issue in accordance with said judgment.

WITNESS my hand this 14th day of November, 2025.

/s/ Thurman Ray Thomas Sheriff of Delaware County, Oklahoma

Randall G. Vaughan,
OBA #11554
Tommy R. Dyer, Jr.,
OBA #13594
DAVIS & THOMPSON, PLLC
P.O. Box 497
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Attorney for Plaintiff

IN THE DISTRICT COURT
IN AND FOR
DELAWARE COUNTY
STATE OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE MATTER OF THE
ESTATE OF MARION L.
BORCHARDT, DECEASED

Case No. PB-2024-192 NOTICE OF HEARING FINAL ACCOUNT AND REPORT OF PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE, PETITION FOR DETERMINATION OF HERIS, LEGATEES AND DEVISEES, AND DEGREE OF DISTRIBUTION AND DISCHARGE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the duly appointed and qualified Personal Representative of the above-captioned Estate has filed this petition a final account of the administration of the Estate and a Petition for Determination of Heirs, Legatees and Devisees, and Decree of Distribution of said Estate and Discharge; hearing of the same has been fixed by the Judge of the District Court for the 2nd day of December, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. at 301 Main Street, at the Courtroom of said Court, in the City of Jay, County of Delaware, State of Oklahoma, and all persons interested in said Estate are notified then and there to appear and show cause, if any they have, why said Final Account should not be settled and allowed, heirs determined, said Estate distributed and the Personal Representative discharged.

/s/ Dave Crutchfield
JUDGE OF THE DISTRICT
COURT

/s/ Clayton M. Baker
Clayton M. Baker, O.B.A.
#30447
DAVIS & THOMPSON, PLLC
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Attorney for Personal
Representative

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LPXLP

DISTRICT COURT OF
DELAWARE COUNTY
STATE OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE MATTER OF THE
ESTATE OF RUELL O'DELL
EUBANK, DECEASED.

PB-2025-100 NOTICE TO CREDITORS

All creditors having claims against Rueell O'Dell Eubank, the same with a description of all security interests and other collateral (if any) held by each creditor with respect to such claim to the named Special Personal Representative at the address of the Attorney for the Special Personal Representative, set forth below, on or before the following presentment date: January 26, 2026, or the same will be forever barred. If the presentment date stated is a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, the presentment date shall be deemed to be the next succeeding day which is not a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday.

Dated: November 18, 2025

/s/ David A. Carpenter
David A. Carpenter, Attorney
for Xirong Su, Personal
Representative of the Estate
of Loy David Christensen,
Deceased

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Representative

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IN AND FOR
THE DISTRICT COURT
OF DELAWARE COUNTY
STATE OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE MATTER OF THE
ESTATE OF LOY DAVID
CHRISTENSEN, Deceased

CASE NO. PB-2025-75 NOTICE TO CREDITORS

STATE OF OKLAHOMA
ss.
COUNTY OF DELAWARE

DISTRICT COURT OF DELAWARE COUNTY STATE OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF SIDNEY ALAN HIATT, DECEASED.

No. PB-2025-96 NOTICE TO CREDITORS

All persons having claims against Sidney Alan Hiatt, deceased, are required to present the same with a description of all security interests and other collateral (if any) held by each creditor with respect to such claim to the named Special Personal Representative of the Estate, c/o Randall G. Vaughan, Personal Representative of the Estate, Davis & Thompson, PLLC, P.O. Box 487, Jay, Oklahoma 74346, on or before the following presentment date: January 26, 2026, or the same will be forever barred.

DATED this 18th day of
November, 2025.

/s/ Randall G. Vaughan
Randall G. Vaughan
OBA #11554
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IN THE DISTRICT COURT IN AND FOR DELAWARE COUNTY STATE OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF Larry Joe Bingham, Deceased.

Case No. PB-2025-98 NOTICE TO CREDITORS

All creditors having claims against Larry Joe Bingham, deceased, are required to present the same with a description of all security interests and other collateral (if any) held by each creditor with respect to such claim to the named Special Personal Representative of the Estate, c/o Randall G. Vaughan, Personal Representative of the Estate, Davis & Thompson, PLLC, P.O. Box 487, Jay, Oklahoma 74346, on or before the following presentment date: the 27th day of January, 2026, or the same will be forever barred.

DATED this 18th day of
November, 2025.

/s/ Tommy R. Dyer, Jr.
Tommy R. Dyer, Jr.
Attorney for Personal
Representative

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