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Christmas is a time for families and friends to get together, but that also means an increased risk of fire. Following a few simple tips will ensure a happy and fire safe holiday season.

- * Be careful with decorations. Choose decorations that are flame resistant or flame retardant.
- * Keep lit candles away from any decorations and other items that can burn. Keep children and pets away from lit candles.
- * Use clips, not nails, to hang lights so the cords do not get damaged.
- * Some lights are for indoor or outdoor use only (not both).
- * Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose connections. Do not connect more light strings than the manufacturer's instructions recommend.
- * Stay in the kitchen when cooking on the stovetop.
- * Test your smoke alarms and tell guests about your home fire escape plan.

FACTS

- ! Almost half of all home decoration fires are started by candles.
- ! Half of holiday decoration fires happen because decorations are placed too close to a heat source.



Blow out lit candles when you leave the room or go to bed. **Turn off** all light strings and decorations before leaving home or going to bed.

For more information on holiday safety from NFPA, click [here](#).

Visit the NFPA [Sparky.org](#) parent/educator page for fun activities and information you can share with children to keep them fire safe.



Code Change Corner (2012 Code Change Update)



The 2012 Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC) became effective July 14, 2014. Permit applicants may choose to utilize the 2009 USBC until July 14, 2015. It is very important to familiarize yourself with the codes that have changed. If you have a project that will start before July 14, 2015, you will have to decide if you will construct under the 2009 or 2012 codes. Understanding the code changes will help you make the best decision. The following is a list of a few of the significant changes to the Virginia Residential Code (VRC/IRC):

- **R308.4 Hazardous Locations**—Section reorganized and clarified. Stair landings at top of stairs no longer considered hazardous locations.
- **R311.2.1 Interior Passage** (Virginia Amendment) - When a dwelling unit has a kitchen and living area on the same level as the “egress door”, an interior passage route, to accommodate visitors, must be provided to access a bedroom and a full bath (where provided on the same level).
- **R311.3.1 Floor Elevation at Required Egress Doors** - Landings at required egress doors to be a maximum of 8.25” where doors do not swing over landing.
- **R314.1 Smoke Detection and Notification** - Physical interconnection not required where wireless interconnection provided.
- **R315.2 Carbon Monoxide Detection Systems**...
- **R325 Swimming Pools** - A Virginia amendment deleted the reference to Appendix G for Swimming Pool and Spa construction. The code now references the International Swimming Pool and Spa Code (ISPSC).
- **R405.1 Concrete or Masonry Foundation Drains** - Filter membranes now required to surround perforated foundation drains.
- **R502.3 Allowable Joist Spans** - Floor joist spans for common lumber species revised/reduced in Tables R502.3.1(1) and R502.3.1(2) to reflect reduced allowable floor joist spans for Southern Pine Lumber. *Spans for headers, girders, ceiling joists and rafters have also been revised/reduced.
- **R507 Decks** - Decks relocated to section R507 and requirements updated/revised.
- **R602.10/R602.12 Wall Bracing** - Important revisions to wall bracing requirements.

There were also significant IRC changes to: definitions, ventilation, stairways, foam plastics, fasteners, stud height, header construction/support, masonry veneer anchorage, lumber notching, uplift resistance, attic assemblies, roof flashing, chimney construction. Stay tuned for 2012 Code Change Training opportunities in our area.



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Please contact Jeff Brown at 804.722.8659 or by [email](#) for further information or if you have questions about the 2012 Virginia Codes.

CHUCK BROWN JOINS THE TEAM



We welcome Chuck Brown as the newest member of the department. Chuck began working in the Planning Division on December 1st as Office Associate II. He retired from the US Army after more than 20 years of service, and is a resident of Prince George County. He will provide support to the Planning Manager, and will work directly with the BZA, Crater Planning and the Planning Commission on land use and zoning cases. He will also support the Rezoning, Site Plan and Subdivision Review Teams.



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