



ASSOCIATION OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO INSURANCE COMPANIES

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PRESS RELEASE

ATTIC - "SAFETY FIRST THIS CHRISTMAS"

This time of year invites numerous fun activities such as lighting candles, hanging decorations, mounting Christmas trees, stringing lights and using fireworks and fire crackers. These activities increase the risk of fire and personal injury which can be easily avoided with the proper precautions.

We applaud the national campaign embarked upon by the Ministry of Public Administration and Communications in collaboration with other Government Ministries and agencies "Have Fun without Having a Blast" to stop the sale and use of scratch bombs and illegal fireworks in Trinidad and Tobago. The heinous injuries suffered by Sally-Ann Cuffie in November is a grim reminder of what can go wrong when pyrotechnics are used indiscriminately. The citizenry is reminded to strictly observe the law regarding fireworks as contained in Sections 99 (1) and (2) and 100 of the Summary Offences Act which prescribes fines in the event of violation. It is our desire to remind those participating in this year's celebration to be cautious as there are many hazards associated with the improper use of pyrotechnics.

In the midst of your celebrations, we advise that you follow guidelines that can ensure safety to persons and property, a few of which are highlighted below:

Be prepared:

- Seek permission in writing at least forty-eight (48) hours prior, from the Commissioner of Police or a Superintendent to set off fireworks.
- Have a full bucket of water handy for any emergency.
- Safeguard your Pets
- Never give ANY firework item to small children.
- Never throw fireworks at another person.
- Never try to re-ignite the fireworks that don't light in the first instance.
- Watch what you wear - If anyone's clothing does catch fire, Drop to the ground. Roll to put out the flames. DO NOT RUN!
- Store fireworks safely - In a closed box, somewhere cool and dry, out of reach of children and animals and away from all sources of heat, until they are ready for use.
- Different fireworks mean different hazards - Read the instructions on each one carefully and follow them properly. Rockets, for instance, should be launched from a rocket launcher, not from a bottle. Sparklers (starlight) need careful handling - light them one at a time at arm's length; don't give one to any child under 5 years of age; make sure that

anyone holding a sparkler wears gloves; and put each spent one into a bucket of water as soon as it's gone out.

Tree & Light Safety

- Do not overload electrical sockets with Christmas tree lights.
- Use no more than three standard-size sets of lights per single extension cord.
- Check each set of lights, new or old, for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections.
- Blow out candles and unplug tree lights and other decorations when out of the room or sleeping.
- Place the Christmas tree well clear of doors--keep the emergency escape route clear of trees, packages and furniture.

Dos & Don'ts While Bursting Crackers:

- Use fireworks outdoors only.
- Light only one firework at a time. This should be done by one person. Others should watch from a safe distance.
- In case of burns, pour large quantity of water on the burnt area.
- In case of major burns, after extinguishing the fire, remove all smouldering clothing. Wrap the victim in a clean bedsheet. The patient should be taken to a burns specialist or a major hospital.
- In case of eye burns, wash the eye with tap water for 10 minutes and take the victim to a hospital.

Have a Safe Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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