

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

David L. Maack, CEM, CPM, WCEM
Racine County Emergency Management

**Operation North Pole-Santa Briefs County Officials
Racine County Prepares For The Holiday Season**

(RACINE) – For the second year in a row, Santa Claus made a special visit to Racine County to brief Racine County officials on his travel plans through the county on Christmas Eve.

Landing on the roof of the Racine County Communications Center, Santa was greeted by County Executive Jonathan Delagrave, Emergency Management Coordinator David Maack, Sheriff's Captain Tom Lamke and Communications Center Director Jackie Bratz.

Santa outlined his flight plan, along with security upgrades that he has made to his sleigh. He even indicated that Rudolph was now using LED lights from Cree Lighting in his nose which has enhanced visibility ten-fold. Afterwards he greeted Dispatchers and thanked them for the job that they do.

County Executive Delagrave was comfortable with the security plans drawn up and has lifted the "No Fly Zone" over the Courthouse so Santa could head due east on his way to Grand Rapids, MI.

"We wanted to ensure that Santa made it safely through Racine County," commented County Executive Delagrave, "We wouldn't want to disappoint anyone on Christmas Eve."

The County Executive also reminded Racine County residents to slow down and enjoy the holiday season with family and friends. "The holidays can be a stressful time, but it's also a time to savor the moment, appreciate our loved ones, and count our blessings," suggested Delagrave, "And please drink responsibly. Use a designated driver to ensure guests make it home safely after a holiday party."

The Racine County Office of Emergency Management offers these other safety tips to help keep you and your family safe during the festivities.



- **Stay off the road during and after a winter storm.**
Avoid travel during inclement weather. If you must be out, give yourself plenty of time to get to your destination and don't forget to pack an emergency supply kit for each passenger in your car.
- **Keep candles away from flammable materials.**
December is the peak time of year for home candle fires and the top three days for home candle fires are Christmas, New Year's Day and Christmas Eve. If you do burn candles, never leave them unattended. Make sure candles are in stable holders and place them where children or pets cannot reach them.
- **Keep an eye on food when cooking.**
The leading cause of fires in the kitchen is unattended cooking and most cooking fires involve the stovetop. Keep anything that can catch on fire such as oven mitts, wooden utensils, towels or food packaging away from the stovetop. Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling, boiling or broiling food. Also use a timer to remind you that you are cooking. Be on Alert! If you are sleepy or have consumed alcohol don't use the stove or stovetop.
- **Turn off holiday lights at night and keep your tree watered**
Don't let your holiday tree dry out. One of every three home Christmas tree fires is caused by electrical problems and a dry tree is dangerous because it can catch on fire easily. Although Christmas tree fires are not common, when they do occur, they are more likely to be serious. On average, one of every 31 reported home Christmas tree fires results in a death compared to an average of one death per 144 total reported home fires.
- **Do Not Overload Electrical Outlets**
Make sure to periodically check the wires – they should not be warm to the touch. Turn off all light strings and decorations before leaving home or going to bed.
- **Smoke Detectors and Seek Help**
Finally, as in every season, have working smoke alarms installed on every level of your home, test them monthly and keep them clean and equipped with fresh batteries at all times. Know when and how to call for help, and remember to practice your home escape plan.

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