



Holiday Safety

life  beats

Dangerous Days in December for the Dutch

This toolbox handles “Christmas” in the Netherlands, but many Dutch traditions are similar to those globally.

For most children in the Netherlands, the most important day during December is the 5th, when Sinterklaas (St. Nicholas) brings them their presents. The name Santa Claus comes from the name Sinterklaas.

From a safety point of view there are a lot of dangers to think about during this, for children, important day.

Let's start with the story and find out!



Sinterklaas: The Story



December 5th

...When Sinterklaas comes ashore from a boat, he leads a procession through the town, wearing his red bishop's robes, riding on a white horse.

On December, 5th children leave clogs or shoes out, by the fireplace and they hope Sinterklaas will come during the night with some presents.

They're told that, during the night, Sinterklaas rides on the roof on his horse and presents are brought down the chimney and put in their shoes.

During "pakjesavond" (present evening) there might be a knock on the door and you might find a sack full of presents.

Also special biscuits and sweets are eaten at the party...

What Can Go Wrong?

During Sinterklaas day there are a lot of people playing the role of Sinterklaas.

They are normally not used to:

- Stepping Off a Boat – Fall into the water
- Horse Riding – Horse accidents
- Wearing a Long Robe – Slips and trips
- Working at Heights – Just in the story
- Working During the Night / Dark – Just in the story
- Acrobatic Movements to Entertain Children – Sore muscles
- A Lot of Make-up – Make-up intolerance
- Throwing Candies (Pepernoten) to Divide Amongst Children – Sore muscles
- Heavy Loaded Bags Full of Presents – Sore muscles



Toy Buying Safety

Below are tips for buying safe toys

- Select toys to suit age, abilities, skills and the child's interest
- For infants and toddlers avoid toys with small parts (choking)
- Don't buy electric toys with heating elements for kids under 8
- Read the label and use the age guidelines for that toy
- Look for sturdy construction and tightly secured small parts
- Discard plastic wrappings immediately to avoid a suffocation hazard



Christmas Day



December 25th

Christmas day itself is much quieter in Holland. It's a day for the traditional family dinner. Many people in the Netherlands also have a Christmas Tree in their houses.

- In the U.S., more than 12,000 people are treated in the nation's emergency rooms each year due to falls, cuts, electrical shocks and burns from faulty holiday decorations or accidents that occur while putting decorations up.
- Safety is not just a work thing... it's a living thing!! During the holiday season with all the stress, tight schedules, crowds, extra work etc., take extra caution and STOP! Take 5 minutes for safety and think about the activities you'll be doing. Think about the possible risks of what you're doing... whether it's your regular job or hanging up Christmas decorations... we must be vigilant to ensure we're around for the holiday celebration.

Decorations



To keep your home and family safe this holiday season, consider the following:

- Only Use UL listed decorations.
- Always inspect cords for fraying and loose connection.
- Do not use indoor extension cords outside; use grounded extension cords.
- Use proper elevation devices. Don't use a chair when a ladder is needed.
- Do not use real candles on the tree.
- If you use a real tree, keep the water re-supplied and check the tree for dryness.
- Place candles away from curtains or other flammables and do not leave them unattended.
- Unplug your decorations/lights when you go to bed.
- Keep fire extinguisher handy.
- Beware of poisonous decorative plants like Poinsettias, Holly, Mistletoe (pet and child hazard).
- Keep decorations out of the reach of small children.

Family Dinner

Even the family holiday meal can have hazards!

- Turn handles on pots and pans inward on stove.
- Do not leave foods that require refrigeration out for too long of a period (spoiled foods).
- Test your fire detectors monthly.
- Do not leave cooking unattended.
- Do not overeat.
- Be aware of food allergies.



New Year's Eve



December 31st

Finally on the last day of December, the habit is to start the New Year with Fireworks.

Each year as a result of using fireworks people are injured or killed. In Holland the last two fatalities were in 2011. In 2013, 810 people visited a first aid department of which, 145 needed to stay in the hospital.

- The highest injury rates were for children aged 10 to 14. 75% of all those injured were male.
- Most fireworks injuries involve burns, but there were also contusions, lacerations and other types of injuries.

If we would have so many injuries resulting from occupational accidents on one day, the whole business is upside down. While we do our utmost to work safe and to get back home safe. Why do we, at home, take those irresponsible risks even with our own children?

Let's Look at Some Safety Precautions If You're Around Fireworks:

When it comes to explosives, follow the same rules on New Year's Eve that you would any other time of the year; leave it to the experts. If you will be using fireworks, follow these tips:

Be Prepared; before you light fireworks:

- Use legal fireworks, available at licensed outlets.
- Store fireworks out of children's reach.
- Keep pets safe indoors.
- Always keep water handy.

Be Safe; when lighting fireworks:

- Only adults should light fireworks.
- Only use outdoors.
- Do not throw fireworks or hold in your hand.
- Protect your eyes.
- Light one firework at a time and move away quickly.
- Never relight a "dud".

Be Responsible; after you finish:

- Soak used fireworks in water.
- Be considerate--clean up used fireworks.
- Keep matches and lighters away from children.



During New Year's Eve

- **Partying:** –Ensure you have a designated driver for the night . . . even better, make arrangements to stay where you are celebrating New Year's Eve. You may be in fine condition, but you don't know about the driver next to you or around the corner.
- **Champagne Corks:** You can avoid eye injuries and broken windows! Chill your champagne to at least 45 °F, as this will make the cork less likely to pop out unexpectedly. Hold the bottle at a 45-degree angle, pointing it away from yourself and others. Then, after removing the wire hood, place a towel over the top of the bottle and grasp the cork. With the bottle in one hand, slowly twist the cork, applying gentle upward pressure. When you feel the cork about to pop out, reverse pressure to a slight downward tilt. If all goes well, you'll have a cork in one hand, a full bottle in the other, and no injuries in sight.



Celebrate Safely



So, if you are prepared for the activities mentioned, none of these days are dangerous.

Happy Holidays!

Below are some links that provide more information about celebrating the holiday season safely.

- [Fireworks Safety](#) – EN
- [Holiday Food Safety](#) – EN
- [Toy Safety Tips](#) – EN
- [June LifeBeats Travel Safety Topic](#) – EN

Happy Holidays to You and Yours

Check Signals

pre-task analysis



WHAT COULD GO WRONG?

WHAT PRECAUTIONS SHOULD I TAKE?

CAN I DO THE JOB SAFELY?

Focus - Start to Finish