

Holiday Safety Made Simple: Universal Technical Institute Experts Share Tips for Your Home & Car

From driving in cold weather to managing heating systems and holiday lights, experts outline easy steps to prevent seasonal hazards.

PHOENIX, Dec. 15, 2025 /PRNewswire/ -- [Universal Technical Institute \(UTI\)](#) faculty members are tapping into their real-world expertise to help families stay safe on the road and at home this holiday season. With millions of people traveling, decorating and gearing up for winter weather, UTI's [automotive](#), [diesel](#), [electrical](#) and [HVACR](#) instructors, many of whom are former technicians, shop owners and industry professionals, are offering practical, easy-to-follow tips to keep you, your car and your home protected during the busiest time of the year.

Stay Safe With Holiday Lights and Decorations

"Holiday lights are festive, but they can also create fire or electrical hazards if they're not used properly," said Phillip Motley, Electrical and Electronics Instructor at [UTI-Mooresville \(N.C.\)](#). "Taking a few minutes to inspect cords, outlets, and placement can help prevent accidents and ensure your home shines safely."

- **Use the right lights outdoors:** Only use light strings rated for exterior use, plug them into a Ground-Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) outlet, use only outdoor-rated extension cords and set a timer so they're never left on unattended or while you're asleep.
- **Inspect your lights:** Check light strings for damage before hanging and use cooler, energy-efficient LED options (commercial-grade if possible).
- **Be ready for emergencies:** Keep at least two ABC fire extinguishers in accessible spots, make sure everyone knows how to use them and ensure emergency numbers are easy to find. Test your smoke detectors regularly and place them throughout the home—including near bedrooms, on every level and even near the Christmas tree during the holidays.

Keep Your Heating System Winter-Ready

"With colder weather setting in, your home's heating system is working overtime," said Dereck Granados, [UTI-Austin \(Texas\)](#) HVACR Instructor. "Simple steps to check your furnace, filters and ventilation can help you avoid costly repairs and keep your home comfortable all season."

- **Check venting:** Make sure exhaust flues and vent pipes are clear and undamaged to prevent carbon monoxide buildup.
- **Reverse ceiling fans:** Set fans to rotate clockwise on low to gently push warm air down and improve heating efficiency.
- **Inspect and seal ductwork:** Look for leaks that waste heated air and drive-up energy costs; seal gaps with mastic or metal-backed tape and insulate exposed ducts.

Safe Driving Tips for the Holidays

"Holiday travel is one of the most demanding times for your vehicle and your attention," said Tyler Rhodes, Education Manager Automotive / Diesel at [UTI-Avondale \(Ariz.\)](#). "A little preparation goes a long way in preventing breakdowns and keeping you and your passengers safe on the road."

- **Stay prepared:** Keep a paper map, some cash and a charged portable battery pack in case your GPS, payment app, or phone lose power during winter travel.
- **Check your battery and spare tire:** Test your battery's Cold Cranking Amps (CCA) before winter and replace it if it's weak. Don't forget auxiliary batteries on luxury or hybrid vehicles and note that EVs can take longer to charge in cold weather. And remember to check the air pressure in your spare tire.
- **Fuel & fluids:** Keep your tank at least half-full to prevent frozen fuel lines and stay warm if stranded; diesel drivers should watch for fuel gelling and Diesel Exhaust Fluid (DEF) levels. Top off cold-weather windshield washer fluid regularly and make sure your coolant is at a proper 50/50 mix to prevent engine freeze.

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