**Be Safe When Ringing in the New Year**

**New Years Celebration Safety**

This year has been a crazy one, and one that many of us would like to forget. As a result, there’s a big likelihood that there will be a lot of celebration this year when saying goodbye to 2020 and hello to 2021.

Unlike new years celebrations of the past, we may not be gathering with large groups of people with parties and crowds. There may be a lot of other smaller gatherings with family members and close friends. Regardless of whether you’re going out, or staying in, safety should always be top of mind. Here are a few tips to share about being safe when ringing in the new year:

1. If you’re going to party with others, limit the number of people at your event and make sure you’re following social distancing. Consider outdoor events (if possible).
2. Avoid loud music where guests will have to shout.
3. Provide plenty of hand sanitizer and handwashing stations. Sanitize high traffic sur-faces such as doorknobs, handles, serving utensils and bathrooms throughout the night. Keep a stock of extra masks around.
4. If you do have guests, avoid accidental sharing of glasses by making sure everyone’s glass or champagne flute looks different. Use wine glass markers, colored glasses, or look into single serving wines or cans of bubbly.
5. Drink responsibly — This can be whether you decide to go out, or even if you choose to stay home. Alcohol and safety don’t always go hand-in-hand. Pace yourself, and if you’re away from home, make sure you have a designated driver. Make sure that if you’re the host, you’re providing food to help make sure guests aren’t drinking on an empty stomach and if you’re the attendee, make sure you eat something. If you don’t know if there will be food at the party because of COVID procedures, eat ahead of time.
6. No guns or fireworks — Getting rid of 2020 may be a good thing, and may warrant a grand gesture, but shooting guns into the air is dangerous because the bullets will land somewhere and they could seriously hurt. Fireworks can be dangerous and may break local laws and noise ordinances. Stick to sparklers and noise makers.
7. Keep pets and children away from lit candles and fireplaces. Also, keep matches and lighters in a locked cabinet out of reach of children.
8. Do not leave food unattended in the kitchen when you are cooking, this is especially true when frying and boiling items on the stovetop. Keep children and pets away from cooking surfaces and hot pans and dishes.
9. Be mindful of your car. New Year’s Day is a top holiday for car thefts! If you’ll be away, don’t leave your car overnight, leave it at home if you won’t be driving home. Keep it in the driveway, and keep it locked.
10. And when it comes time for the New Year’s kiss, stick to kissing someone from your own household. :)