



Department of Commerce

Division of State Fire Marshal

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Keep your Holidays Safe

FOLLOW THESE BASIC TIPS:

TREES

When purchasing an artificial tree, look for a "Fire Resistant" label. When purchasing a live tree, check for freshness - make sure the needles are soft and don't fall off. Live trees need water, and lots of it. Cut about one inch off of the bottom of the trunk before putting the tree in the stand. Add water and check daily. Dry trees can burn in SECONDS! Don't block your exit with your tree. Remove live trees from your home as soon as possible. Most Christmas tree fires occur on or after New Year's Day.

LIGHTS

Check each set for damaged sockets or wires. Discard bad sets. Use UL approved light sets. Follow the manufacturer recommendations concerning the maximum number of light sets that can be connected together. Replace burnt out bulbs with bulbs of the same wattage as indicated on the tag attached to the light set. Turn off all lights when you go to bed or leave the house. Never use electric lights on a metallic tree. You could be electrocuted. Use only light sets and extension cords marked "for outdoor use" outside your home. Fasten outdoor lights securely with insulated staples or hooks. Use circuits protected by ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs).

DECORATIONS

Use only non-combustible or flame-resistant materials to trim a tree. Never use lighted candles on or near a tree or other evergreens. Keep children and pets in mind when placing decorations on a tree.

GIFTS

"Think big" when choosing toys for small children - small parts could be a choking hazard. Make sure gifts are appropriate for the child's age. "Think easy" when choosing a gift for someone who may have arthritis or some other physical challenge. Make sure there is a "fire-resistant" label on infant's sleepwear. Consider giving a gift that shows you care about someone. Smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors and fire extinguishers make great gifts.

FIREPLACES and HEATERS

Before starting a fire in a fireplace, remove all decorations (including those stockings hung by the fireplace) and be sure the flu is open. Do not burn wrapping papers in the fireplace. They can burn extremely fast; throwing off sparks and can ignite creosote that has previously accumulated in the chimney. Always use a screen in front of the fireplace. Also consider using a fire-resistant carpet or a mat (ones made for fireplaces) on the floor in front of the fireplace. Keep all combustible materials, including wrapping paper away from heaters. When plugging in electric heaters, make sure that the outlet was designed to handle the load. Be safe; do not plug anything else into the socket with the heater. When using kerosene heaters, make sure you use the correct fuel only. The wrong fuel may cause a fire or explosion.

BE PREPARED

Check your smoke detectors monthly. Replace the batteries in your smoke detectors twice a year - Change your clock, change your batteries. Install smoke detectors on each level of your home and in sleeping areas. Develop an escape plan with two ways out from each room. Practice your fire escape plan with your family.