



CHRISTMAS TREE SAFETY PREVENT FIRES

By carefully decorating your Christmas tree you can help make your holidays safe.

Facts and Figures

- Christmas trees were the first item to catch on fire in 370 home fires, resulting in 14 deaths, 21 injuries and \$16.8 million in direct property damage in 2004.
- On average, one in 22 reported home Christmas tree fires resulted in a death.
- More than four of every ten home Christmas tree fires are caused by electrical problems or malfunctions (44%). One in four (24%) home Christmas tree fires resulted from a heat source placed too close to the tree. Six percent were started by children playing with fire.
- Holiday lights were involved in 16% of the home Christmas tree structure fires. Fixed or portable space heaters were involved in 6% of these incidents.
- Candles were the heat source in 12% of the home Christmas tree fires. Two-thirds of the home Christmas tree fires were reported in December, 20% were reported in January.

Safety Tips

- Buy a fresh tree that is not shedding its needles.
- Cut the trunk at an angle and install the tree in a large, deep non-tip stand well away from fireplaces, exits, and heat sources.
- Be sure your tree has a constant supply of water – check the level daily. If your tree dries out, remove it promptly and store it away from your home until you can dispose of it.
- If you use an artificial tree, be sure its flame-retardant.
- When decorating your tree, always use safe tree lights. (Some lights are designed only for indoor or outdoor use, but not both.) Connect no more than three strands of push-in bulbs and maximum of 50 bulbs for screw-in bulbs.
- Never use electric lights on a metal tree.
- Throw away sets of lights that have cracked or frayed cords or loose or damaged sockets.
- Don't overload electrical outlets or run extension cords, under carpets, across doorways, or near heaters.
- Unplug all decorative lights before leaving your home or going to bed.
- Keep a watchful eye on your children and pets when around the tree, and do not let them play with the wiring or lights.

- Make sure the tree is at least three feet (one meter) away from any heat source and try to position it near an outlet so that cords are not running long distances. Do not place the tree where it may block exits.
- Never use lit candles to decorate a tree, and place them well away from the tree branches.
- Safely dispose of the tree when it begins dropping needles. Dried-out trees are highly flammable and should not be left in a house or garage, or placed against the house.
- Keep pets away from light strings and electrical decorations.