

DECEMBER: Week 1 – Christmas Tree Safety

Overview: Each year, fire departments nationwide respond to an average of 210 structure fires caused by Christmas trees. A heat source too close to the Christmas tree started over one-quarter (26%) of these fires. Christmas tree fires are not common, but when they occur, they are likely to be serious. Carefully decorating Christmas trees can help make your holidays safer.

Resources: The following resources are available:

- Christmas tree fact sheet
 - <http://www.nfpa.org/~media/files/news-and-research/fire-statistics/fact-sheets/christmastreefactsheet.pdf>
- Christmas tree safety tip sheet
 - <http://www.nfpa.org/~media/files/public-education/resources/safety-tip-sheets/christmastreesafetytips.jpg>
- “Safe Christmas Tree Disposal Tips” YouTube video
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Zu-522zE3E>
- “Be A Good Elf” YouTube video:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mRsjqGZFjLU>



Media Tools: Use the following pre-written media releases and social media posts in your efforts to promote Christmas tree safety:

- **Twitter**
 - We wish everyone a safe, fire-free holiday! Merry Christmas! <https://youtu.be/mRsjqGZFjLU> #FireSafety #merrychristmas
 - Need some Christmas cheer? Be a good elf! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mRsjqGZFjLU> #merrychristmas #FireSafety #beagoodelf
 - Christmas trees are beautiful but can also be fire hazards. Here's what you should know: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Zu-522zE3E>
- **Facebook**
 - As you deck the halls this holiday season, be fire smart. A small fire that spreads to a Christmas tree can grow large very quickly. Learn more here: <http://www.nfpa.org/~media/files/public-education/resources/safety-tip-sheets/christmastreesafetytips.jpg>
 - One-quarter of home Christmas tree fires are caused by electrical problems. Although Christmas tree fires are not common, when they do occur they are more likely to be serious. Learn more here: <http://www.nfpa.org/~media/files/public-education/resources/safety-tip-sheets/christmastreesafetytips.jpg>
 - Keep your tree and house safe! Make sure your Christmas tree is at least 3 feet away from any heat source, like fireplaces, radiators, candles, heat vents or lights.

- Keep your Christmas tree watered! Learn more info here:
<http://www.nfpa.org/~media/files/public-education/resources/safety-tip-sheets/christmastreesafetytips.jpg>

Educator Tip: Coordinate with local Christmas tree vendors to deliver a consistent fire safety message to customers. Print and make copies of NFPA's Christmas tree safety tip sheet (link here: <http://www.nfpa.org/~media/files/public-education/resources/safety-tip-sheets/christmastreesafetytips.jpg>) to hand out at Christmas tree sale locations. Safety sheets are also available through the SFMO.

NFPA/SFMO Messaging:

- Picking the tree
 - If you have an artificial tree, be sure it is labeled, certified, or identified by the manufacturer as fire retardant.
 - If you choose a live tree, select one with fresh, green needles that do not fall off when touched. The trunk should be sticky to the touch. Old trees can be identified by bouncing the tree trunk on the ground. If many needles fall off, the tree has been cut too long, has probably dried out, and is a fire hazard.
- Placing the tree
 - Before placing the tree in the stand, cut 2 inches from the base of the trunk.
 - Make sure the tree is at least 3 feet away from any heat source, like fireplaces, radiators, candles, heat vents or lights. Heat will dry out a tree, causing it to be more easily ignited by heat, flame or sparks. Be careful not to drop or flick cigarette ashes near a tree. Do not put your live tree up too early or leave it up for longer than 2 weeks.
 - Make sure the tree is not blocking an exit.
 - Add water to the tree stand. Be sure to add water daily.
- Lighting the tree
 - Use lights that have the label of an independent testing laboratory. Some lights are only for indoor or outdoor use, but not both.
 - Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Read manufacturer's instructions for number of strands to connect.
 - Never use lit candles to decorate the tree.
 - Always turn off Christmas tree lights before leaving home or going to bed.
- Disposing of the tree
 - Get rid of the tree when it begins dropping needles. Dried out trees are a fire danger and should not be left in the home or garage or placed outside against the home.
 - Never put tree branches or needles in a fireplace or wood burning stove.