

# Holiday Safety Tips

The Holiday Season should be one of family, friends, joy and festivities. Unfortunately, fires occur during this joyful season. Two causes for fires during this time are Christmas Trees and heating appliances. Nationwide, improper care of natural Christmas trees results in over 300 fires. The NFPA ranks home heating as the second highest cause for residential fires. By following a few basic safety tips, you can keep the Holiday Season a happy and joyous event... not a tragic memory.

A fire on any day seems bad, but a fire at Christmas time seems to be the worst. On average, 300 Christmas trees catch fire each year, with electrical problems the most common culprit. Here are a few tips to keep your tree green and your holiday safe.

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1. When you buy a tree, have the vendor make a fresh cut an inch from the bottom as this will help the tree drink.
  2. If you buy your tree early and keep it outside, store it away from wind and sun and keep the bottom in a bucket of water.
  3. Make sure your lights are safe. If you need outdoor lights, make sure the ones you buy are meant for outdoor use. Make sure your lights carry a certification from a testing laboratory.
  4. Do not use electric lights on a metal tree.
  5. Discard any strings of lights that are frayed, broken or the insulation is cracked. Christmas lights are inexpensive.
  6. Unplug your Christmas tree before you leave or go to bed.
  7. Do not buy a tree that is dry and dropping needles. To check for freshness, loosely grip the end of a branch and pull your hand over it. Only a few needles should fall off.
  8. Make sure your tree stand holds plenty of water and do not let it run out.
  9. If your tree seems wobbly, center it in the stand more securely and redo the bolts or screws.
  10. If you buy an artificial tree, make sure it is fire-retardant.
  11. Keep your tree at least three feet from furnaces, radiators and fireplaces.
  12. Try to position your tree near an outlet so that the cords are not running long distances. Do not place the tree where it may block exits.
  13. When Christmas is over or when the tree starts to drop needles, dispose of it properly. Do not leave it in your house or put it in your garage.
  14. Keep a close eye on small children when they are around the tree as many small decorations and ornaments are sharp, breakable and may be swallowed.

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From the Village of Chester Office of Building & Codes we wish all of you a  
Very Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and a Joyous New Year!

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