



A Safety Message about Decorating for the Holidays

The Consumer Products Safety Commission estimates there are more than 14,000 candle-related fires each year that result in 170 deaths and about \$350 million in property loss. Dried out Christmas trees are involved in about 200 fires annually, resulting in 10 deaths and about \$10 million in property damage. During November and December of each year, about 10,000 people are treated in hospital emergency rooms as a result of falls, cuts, shocks, and burns related to holiday decorating. Please use the following safety tips when decorating this year:

Trees and Decorations:

- When purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label “Fire resistant”. Although this label does not mean the tree won’t catch on fire, it does indicate the tree is more resistant to burning.
- When purchasing a live tree, check for freshness. A fresh tree is green, needles are hard to pull from branches and do not break when bent between your fingers. The bottom of a fresh tree is sticky with resin, and, when tapped on the ground, the tree should not lose many needles.
- When setting up a tree at home, place it away from fireplaces and heaters. Because heated rooms dry out live trees rapidly, be sure to keep the stand filled with water. Place the tree out of the way of traffic and do not block doorways.
- In homes with small children, take special care to avoid sharp or breakable decorations, keep trimmings with small removable parts out of the reach of children who could swallow or inhale small pieces, and avoid trimmings that resemble candy or food that may tempt a child to eat them.

Lights:

- Indoors or outside, use lights that have been tested for safety by a nationally recognized testing laboratory such as UL. Use only newer lights that have thicker wiring and are required to have safety fuses to prevent the wires from overheating.
- Check each set of lights (new or old) for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections. Throw out damaged sets.
- If using an extension cord, make sure it is rated for the intended use.
- Never use electric lights on a metallic tree. The tree can become charged with electricity from faulty lights and a person could be electrocuted.
- When using lights outdoors, check labels to be sure they have been certified for outdoor use and only plug them into a ground fault circuit interrupter.

Candles:

- Keep lighted candles away from items that can catch fire and burn easily such as trees, curtains, and furniture.
- Always use non-combustible holders and keep them away from children and pets.
- Extinguish all candles before you go to bed, leave the room, or leave the house.