

## HOLIDAY FIRE PREVENTION

Each year, fires occurring during the holiday season injure 2,000 individuals and cause over \$500 million in damage in the United States. According to the United States Fire Administration (USFA), there are simple life-saving steps you can take to ensure a safe and happy holiday. By following some of the outlined safety tips, individuals can greatly reduce their chances of becoming a holiday fire casualty.

### HOLIDAY TREE FIRE HAZARDS

Special fire safety precautions need to be taken when keeping a tree in the house. A burning tree can rapidly fill a room with fire and deadly smoke.



### SELECTING A TREE FOR THE HOLIDAY

Needles on fresh trees should be green and hard to pull back from the branches, and the needles should not break if the tree has been freshly cut. 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.

### CARING FOR YOUR TREE

Do not place your tree close to a heat source, including a fireplace, heat vent or space heater. Heat will dry out the 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 two weeks. Keep the tree stand filled with water at all times. Consider using a potted or artificial tree.



### DISPOSING OF YOUR TREE

Never put tree branches or needles in a fireplace or wood burning stove. When the tree becomes dry, discard it promptly. The best way to dispose of your tree is by taking it to a recycling center or having it hauled away by a community pickup service.

### MAINTAIN YOUR HOLIDAY LIGHTS

Inspect holiday lights each year for frayed wires, bare spots, gaps in the insulation, broken or cracked sockets, and excessive kinking or wear before putting them up. Use only lighting listed by an approved testing laboratory. If there is any question as to the integrity of your lights, replace them with a new set of lights.

### DO NOT OVERLOAD ELECTRICAL OUTLETS

Follow the directions on the light sets when connecting your lights. Connect lights to an extension cord before plugging the cord into the outlet. Make sure to periodically check the wires - they should not be warm to the touch. Never leave holiday lights on while unattended.



### USE ONLY NONFLAMMABLE DECORATIONS

All decorations should be nonflammable or flame retardant and placed away from heat sources.

### HOME ESCAPE PLAN

Finally, as in every season, have working smoke alarms installed on every level and in every room of your home. Test smoke detectors monthly and keep them clean and equipped with fresh batteries at all times. Be sure to know two ways out of every room in your home. Have a meeting place so everyone knows where to go when they get out.