
CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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CAL FIRE ENCOURAGES ALL CALIFORNIANS TO GET “FIRE SMART” Prevent Fires and Injuries This Holiday Season

Sacramento - The holiday season is here and with it increased excitement about adorning homes with traditional decorations. As beautiful as they are, holiday decorations are an added home fire hazard. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), a candle-caused fire in the home is reported every 30 minutes.

In 2009, 166 Christmas tree fires were reported to the CAL FIRE - Office of the State Fire Marshal. There were 100 reported fires caused by the ignition of Christmas decorations. As of December 1 there have been nearly 40,000 reported fire incidents with over 80 tragic fire deaths in California.

“We don’t want a fire to devastate your holiday celebrations,” said CAL FIRE Acting State Fire Marshal Tonya Hoover. “If everyone practices a little extra fire safety this holiday, we can help reduce the number of holiday decoration related fires and deaths.”

Follow these safety tips to ensure a safe and happy holiday season:

Christmas Trees

- When selecting your Christmas tree, choose a fresh one with green needles.
- Check the water level in the tree stand every day.
- Keep the tree at least 3 feet away from any heat source including fireplaces and heating vents.
- Never use lit candles to decorate a tree.

Holiday Lights

- Keep outdoor decorative lights outdoors and indoor lights indoors.
- Inspect lights every year for frayed wires or cracked sockets.
- Don’t link more than 3 light strands together unless the directions indicate it is safe to do so.
- Turn decorative lights out when you leave the house or go to bed.
- Only use lights that have been tested and labeled by a recognized testing laboratory.

Candle Safety

- Make sure candles are in a stable holder and placed where they cannot be easily knocked over.
- Position candles away from anything that can burn.
- Never leave lit candles unattended.

- Keep candles out of the reach of young children.

Smoking & Home Fires

- If you smoke, smoke outside.
- Use deep, wide ashtrays on a sturdy table.
- Check under furniture cushions and in other places where people smoke for cigarette butts that may have fallen out of sight.
- Alcohol consumption may result in a smoker falling asleep with a lit cigarette.
- Make sure smoke detectors are in working order by checking them every month and changing the batteries twice a year.
- Don't "borrow" or remove batteries from smoke alarms even temporarily.

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