



City of Madison Fire Department

News Release

Date: December 10, 2008

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Christmas Tree Safety

Each year, fire departments respond to an average of 210 structure fires caused by Christmas trees. Keep your holiday safe by following some simple guidelines:

- If you have an artificial tree, be sure it is labeled, certified, or identified by the manufacturer as fire-retardant.
- When purchasing a live tree, choose a tree with fresh, green needles that do not fall off when touched.
- Before placing the tree in the stand, cut 1–2” from the base of the trunk.
- Make sure the tree is at least three feet away from any heat source, like fireplaces, radiators, candles, heat vents or lights.
- Make sure the tree is not blocking an exit.
- Be sure to add water to the tree stand daily.
- 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. Connect no more than three strands of mini string sets and a maximum of 50 bulbs for screw-in bulbs.
- Never use lit candles to decorate the tree.
- Always turn off Christmas tree lights before leaving home or going to bed.

After Christmas:

- 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.
- Check with your local community to find a recycling program.
- Bring outdoor electrical lights inside after the holidays to prevent hazards and make them last longer.

Fast Facts:

- 48% of home Christmas tree fires are caused by electrical problems.
- A heat source too close to the tree causes 27% of the fires.

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