



STATE OF WISCONSIN
DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AFFAIRS

DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Michael Hinman
Administrator

Jim Doyle
Governor

For Immediate Release: November 29, 2010
Contact: Tod Pritchard, 608-242-3324
Jerad Albracht, 608-242-3215

Are You Ready for the Holidays?

ReadyWisconsin has simple tips to keep the holiday safe

(MADISON) – The joys of the holidays are all around us, but so are the dangers. Based on data from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), an estimated 250 home fires involving Christmas trees and another 170 home fires involving holiday lights and other decorative lighting occur each year. Together, these fires result in 21 deaths and 43 injuries.

By taking a little TLC...Tree, Lights and Candle Safety...you can help ensure a safe and happy holiday season for yourself and your family.

“T” is for Tree:

Selecting a Tree for the Holiday

Needles on fresh trees should be green and hard to pull back from the branches, and the needle 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 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 or heat vent. The 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. Keep the tree stand filled with water at all times.

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 pick-up service.

Artificial Christmas Trees

If you are using a metallic or artificial tree, make sure it is flame retardant.

(MORE)

"L" is for Lights:

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.

Do Not Overload Electrical Outlets

Do not link more than three light strands unless the directions indicate it is safe. Connect strings of 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. Do not leave holiday lights on unattended.

Use Only Nonflammable Decorations

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

C is for Candle:

Avoid Using Lit Candles

Candle use increases the incidence of holiday fires. If you do use them, make sure they are in stable holders and place them where they cannot be easily knocked down. Never leave the house with candles burning. Keep candles at a height where children and pets cannot reach them. Consider using flameless candles that provide the appearance and glow of a candle but are safely battery operated.

Never Put Lit Candles on a Tree

Do not go near a Christmas tree with an open flame – candles, lighters or matches.

Finally, as in every season, have working smoke alarms installed on every level of your home, test them monthly and keep them clean and equipped with fresh batteries at all times. Know when and how to call for help, and remember to practice your home escape plan.

ReadyWisconsin is a campaign from Wisconsin Emergency Management with a mission to prepare individuals, families and businesses for emergencies and disasters. For additional winter safety tips, visit <http://ReadyWisconsin.wi.gov> or follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/ReadyWisconsin) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/ReadyWisconsin).

###