

Decorating homes and businesses is a long-standing tradition during the holiday season. Unfortunately, it's these decorations that increase the chance of fire. Follow a few simple Christmas tree and holiday decoration fire safety tips to ensure happy holidays.

**Christmas Trees can remain relatively fire safe if you follow these simple steps:**

- When selecting your live Christmas tree, choose a fresh one with green needles.
- Re-cut the trunk at least two inches above the old cut as soon as you get it home. This allows it to continue to pull moisture into its foliage.
- Keep the trunk in water immediately after it is re-cut. Moisture is the key to keeping the tree fresh and thereby enhancing its fire resistance. If the tree will be kept outside for a few days, stand it in a bucket of water until you are ready to bring it indoors.
- Check the water levels daily. Never let the water level go below the bottom of the trunk. Commercial floral preservatives can also be added to the water to help keep the tree fresh.
- Locate any tree at least 3 feet away from sources of heat. Avoid placing any tree, live or artificial, near a heater outlet, wood stove or fireplace. Put it in the coolest location possible.
- Never leave a lighted tree unattended.
- Remove the tree immediately after the holidays. Even a properly cared-for live tree will eventually die. Take it to a recycling center or leave for your refuse collector.
- I WOULD ADD THAT ARTIFICIAL TREES ARE MUCH, MUCH SAFER THAN REAL TREES... JUST MY OWN OPINION.

**Lights & Decorations**

- Choose decorations that are flame-resistant or flame-retardant.
- Keep decorations away from heat sources, windows and doors.
- Properly install your holiday lights. Use lights that have the label of an independent testing laboratory.
- Be sure to use indoor lights inside and outdoor lights outside.
- Make sure all electrical cords have no frayed or cracked wires or broken sockets. Do not attempt to repair a worn light set! Throw it away and purchase a new replacement.
- Do not overload electrical outlets.
- Do not link more than three light strands, unless the directions indicate it is safe.
- Do not leave lights turned on for prolonged periods or unattended.
- Keep your exits clear by keeping decorations away from windows and doors.

- In addition to being shatterproof and shock-resistant, LED lights produce almost no heat, making them safe to touch and greatly reducing the risk of fire.