

Christmas

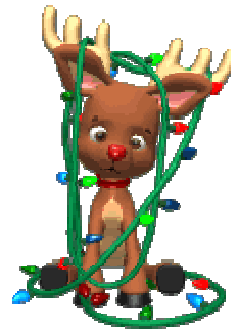
Holiday Safety Tips



LIGHTS

Christmas tree lights and other decorations set the theme for the Christmas holidays. Here are some very important points to remember when using them.

- Use only lights that have been tested for safety. Identify these by the U.L. Label from Underwriters Laboratories.
- Check each set of lights for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or base wires, loose connections, etc. Discard any of this equipment that you deem unsafe.
- Check labels of lights to be used outdoors to see that they are suitable for outdoor use. Never use indoor lights outside. Fasten outside lights securely to trees, wall or other firm support to protect them from wind damage.
- Use no more than three sets of lights per single extension. Read manufacturer's instructions carefully and do not use more than the recommended number of lights in a circuit.
- Always turn off lights on trees and other decorations when you retire or leave your home. A short circuit in any of this equipment could cause a fire.
- Never use electric lights on a metallic tree. Damaged insulation in lighting on a metallic tree could cause the entire tree to be charged with electricity. To avoid this danger, use colored spotlights above or beside a metal tree, and do not fasten to the tree.
- Keep children away from light sets and electrical decorations. All lights present the problem of shock and casualty hazards for curious kids.



PAPER

The opening of Christmas presents is always a special time during the holidays. Take special precautions when disposing of the wrappings.

- Always dispose of wrappings immediately after opening.
- Place trash in garbage containers. Don't burn wrappings in the fireplace, as they may ignite suddenly and cause a flash fire.

TREES

Artificial trees (plastic) should bear the U.L. Label. Some unlabeled plastic trees burn with extreme vigor.

Do not rely on chemical coatings or sprays to make your live evergreen flame-resistant. Follow the safety rules below when shopping for a natural tree.

A fresh tree will stay green longer and be less of a fire hazard than a dry tree. To check for freshness, remember:



- Check for color and scent. A fresh tree is deep green in color and has a strong scent of pine.
- Be sure that the needles do not readily fall from the tree.
- The trunk butt of a fresh tree should be sticky with sap.

Place your Christmas tree in a location away from fireplaces, radiators or other heat sources. Be sure that it is out of the traffic pattern and does not block doorways.

Cut off about two inches of the trunk. Mount tree in a sturdy, water-holding stand that has wide-spread legs. Be sure that the tree is stable.

Fill base holder with water. Keep it full of water while the tree is indoors (as you would fresh flowers). Remember, heated rooms dry trees out rapidly, and a dry tree is a fire hazard.

Buy a live tree this year, and after Christmas donate the tree for planting in one of our beautiful City parks. An employee of the City will pick up the tree at your house for planting the next spring.

Local nurseries in Richland support this program and will have sign-up forms and live Christmas trees on hand for you to choose from. Ask for the free instruction sheet on the care and use of a live Christmas tree.

Your fireplace is a source of warmth and heat. Before starting your fire, be sure to remove all paper decorations and bows from the immediate area. Be sure the flue is open. Never set up your Christmas tree near the fireplace, as this is a potential fire hazard.

Use a screen to enclose the front of your fireplace to confine live embers and sparks to fire box.

Use care with "fire salts" which produce colored flames when thrown on a wood fire. They contain heavy metals, and cause intense gastrointestinal irritation or vomiting if eaten. Keep away from children.

TRIMMINGS

The trimming of your Christmas tree is a very important part of your holiday festivities. Keep the safety of your family in mind when selecting trimmings, and decorating your tree.

When choosing the finishing touches for the tree, purchase tinsel or artificial icicles of a non-leaded material. Leaded materials may be hazardous if eaten by children or pets.

If youngsters are a part of your family, take special care to:

- Avoid any decorations that tend to break easily or have sharp edges.
- Keep tree trimmings that are small or have removable parts out of the reach of your child. These pieces may be swallowed.
- Don't purchase ornaments that resemble candy or foods as small children may try to eat them.

CANDLES

- Never use lighted candles on a tree or near other evergreens.
- Always use non-flammable holders.
- Keep away from other decorations, and wrapping paper.
- Place candles where they cannot be knocked down or blown over.
- Never leave lit candles unattended.



PLAN AHEAD

An emergency could strike your home at any time. Here are a few simple rules to follow to help your family through a crisis.

- Keep fire department, police, ambulance, doctor, and other emergency service numbers posted on or near your telephone.
- Keep a U.L. Listed multi-purpose fire extinguisher in your home and know how to use it.
- Take advantage of the Richland Fire & Emergency Services Department free Home Fire Safety Survey. Call 942-7560 to schedule yours.

GENERAL RULES FOR CHRISTMAS SAFETY

- Keep matches, lighters, and candles out of the reach of children.
- Avoid smoking near flammable decorations.
- Avoid using loose flowing clothes, especially long, open sleeves, near the open flames of a fireplace, stove, or candle-lit table.
- Never burn candles near evergreens on a mantelpiece or table. Burning evergreens in the fireplace can be hazardous. When dry, greens burn like tinder. Their flames can flare out of control, sending sparks flying about a room.

- Plan for safety. Remember there is no substitute for common sense. Look for and eliminate potential danger spots near candles, fireplaces, trees, and electrical connections.
- Inform guests and relatives who may be staying in your home during the holidays of your fire escape plan and safe meeting place