



... Remember to test your smoke alarms ...

Christmas Tree Safety

The U.S. Fire Administration offers the following tips for Christmas Tree safety during this holiday season

Selecting a natural tree

Needles shouldn't fall easily from the tree, and the trunk should be sticky to the touch. Another way to check is to bounce the tree on the ground – if many needles fall off, look for a fresher tree.

Caring for the tree

Cut two inches from the base of the tree before placing the tree in a stand. Keep the stand filled with water at all times. Do not place the tree close to a heat source, including a fireplace or heat vent. Make sure the tree is not blocking an exit. Discard the tree after Christmas or when it is dry.

Disposal of the tree

Do not burn tree branches in the fireplace or a wood-burning stove; communities usually schedule "tree pick-up days" – or, you can take the tree to a recycling center.

Decorations

Use only non-flammable or flame-retardant items to decorate your tree. (If you are using an artificial tree, make sure it is flame-retardant.)

Inspect holiday lights for frayed wires, broken or cracked sockets, or other signs of wear that may cause the lights to be unsafe. Read the manufacturer's instructions for number of light strands which can be safely connected, and don't overload electrical outlets.

Never put a lit candle on a Christmas tree. When using candles in your holiday decorating scheme, remember to never leave a lit candle unattended, and establish a three-foot "kid-safe zone" around the candle location.

Always turn off Christmas tree lights before leaving home or going to bed.

From the American Christmas Tree Association:

"According to a National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) report issued in 2015, fires occurring during the holiday season injure 2,600 individuals and cause over \$930 million in damage each year . . . **Sadly, Christmas tree-related fires have a higher incident of fatalities than typical house fires**, according to the NFPA report."

During this Holiday Season, let's all take a few minutes to double check our holiday decorations to make sure we are using the safest items in our homes and businesses.

Happy Holidays!

Allegany County Emergency Services

