
















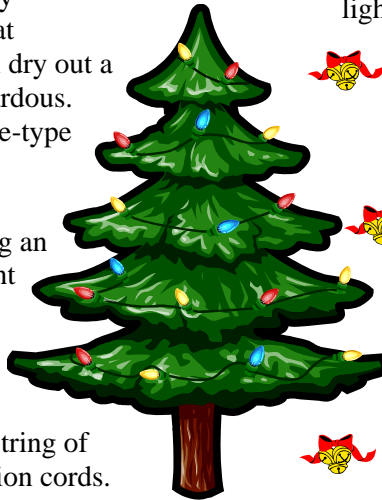


Northshore Fire Department Offers Tips for a Fire Safe Holiday Season

-  Choose a fresh tree. You can test the freshness of a cut tree by bouncing the trunk on the ground two or three times. Only a very few needles should fall. The branches should bend easily and not break.
-  Cut two inches from the tree's base. This will open up the pores which have been clogged by sap and make the tree more able to absorb water.
-  Use a stand that holds plenty of water. Put the tree in water as soon as possible. Water the tree daily. Don't let the stand go dry. Once the water dries up, the tree trunk will seal over and it cannot draw more water.
-  Place your tree well away from any woodstove, fireplace, heater or heat register. Constant radiant heat will dry out a tree quickly and make it very hazardous. Use only cool-burning or miniature-type tree lights to reduce drying.
-  Make sure your tree is not blocking an exit. It should not be placed in front of a door or in a hallway.
-  Put the tree close to an outlet so you will not need to use extension cords. If you have more than one string of lights, use only heavy-duty extension cords.
-  Use only lights in perfect condition and that have a tag showing that they are approved by Underwriters Laboratories (UL) for safety.
-  With the lights unplugged, check all lights and cords for broken sockets or bare wires. Lay the lights on a fireproof surface and leave them switched on for 15 minutes. Check for signs of overheating, such as smoking or melting. Don't take a chance! Throw away any strings of lights that show signs or wear of overheating. Even the smallest spark from a frayed light cord can ignite a dry tree.
-  Never use electric lights on a metal tree. There is a danger of electrical shock! If you do buy an artificial tree, be sure it is labeled as fire-resistant. Look for the UL fire safety label.
-  Always unplug the lights before going to bed or leaving the house. Your tree will dry out faster if you leave the lights on for long periods of time.
-  Never burn a candle on or near a Christmas tree. Keep all candles, matches and lighters away from small children. Many Christmas tree fires have started by children playing with matches or candles near the tree. Also be sure that all presents under the tree are kept away from lights.
-  When the needles get brittle and dull or begin to fall, this is a sign that the tree is beginning to dry out and should be removed.
-  After you have taken your tree down, never burn your tree in a fireplace or wood stove. A dry tree can explode into flames, causing a chimney fire or igniting other objects in the room.
-  Never hang stockings near a fireplace that will be used.
-  All decorations should be flame-resistant.
-  Candles need sturdy nonflammable holders. Place them where they will not be easily knocked over.
-  Candles should be put out before leaving the room or the house, or going to bed.



If you have questions about holiday fire safety, call the Northshore Fire Department at 425-486-2784.

Happy Holidays from the Northshore Fire Department!
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