



RAFTING CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH
GROWING AS A CHURCH WITH A REDEMPITIVE PURPOSE

CHRISTMAS TREE



SAFETY TIPS





CHRISTMAS TREE SAFETY TIPS

WHEN YOU DECK THE HALLS THIS HOLIDAY SEASON, KEEP FIRE SAFETY IN MIND.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPSA), half of all Christmas tree fires are caused by either an electrical problem or a heat source too close to the tree.

The most recent NFPSA data indicate that U.S. fire departments respond to an average of 160 fires each year that start with Christmas trees. These fires cause on average two deaths, 12 injuries, and more than \$10 million in direct property damage. Fortunately, you can prevent these accidents by taking proper safety measures when purchasing, setting up, decorating, and disposing of (or storing) your tree.

FACTS

- ! **Almost one third** of home Christmas tree fires are caused by electrical problems.
- ! Although Christmas tree fires are not common, when they do occur, they are more likely to be serious.
- ! A heat source too close to the tree causes more than **one in every five** of the fires.

PURCHASING THE TREE

Artificial Trees

When purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label "Fire-Retardant." Although this label does not mean the tree will not catch fire, it does indicate that the tree will resist burning and extinguish quickly.

Live Trees

When purchasing a live tree, check for freshness:

- The needles are green.
- The needles are hard to pull from the branches.
- The needles bend between your fingers without breaking.
- Watch out for trees with a greenish cast on the trunks and branches. Many growers spray trees with green paint to make them look more appealing.





CHRISTMAS TREE SAFETY TIPS

SETTING UP THE TREE

- Keep the tree outdoors for a few days in a bucket filled with water before bringing it indoors to decorate. This will maximize freshness and minimize fire risks.
- When setting up a tree, place it away from fireplaces, radiators, portable heaters, heater vents, electronics, and electrical equipment.
- Cut off about two inches of the trunk to expose fresh wood for better water absorption.

DECORATING THE TREE

Lights

- Use only indoor or outdoor lights that have been safety tested and labeled as such by an independent testing laboratory.
- Check each set of lights, new or old, for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections. Discard damaged sets or repair them before use.
- Use no more than three standard-size sets of lights per single extension cord.
- Use only one extension cord per outlet.
- Do not run electrical cords under rugs. Walking traffic can weaken the insulation and cause the wires to overheat, increasing the chances of fire or electric shock.
- Avoid placing electrical cords behind or beneath the furniture. Pinched cords can fray and short.





CHRISTMAS TREE SAFETY TIPS

DECORATING THE TREE

Lights (continued)

- Keep animals away from electrical cords to avoid hazards caused by entanglement and chewing.
- Keep cords and lights away from a tree's water supply.
- Turn off all lights on trees and other decorations when you go to bed or leave the house or office.
- Position bulbs so that they are not in direct contact with needles or ornaments.
- An artificial tree with high metallic content can become electrically charged by faulty lights. Any person touching the lights could be electrocuted.

GIFTS UNDER THE TREE

- Never place paper-wrapped or paper-bagged gifts near open flames or electrical connections.
- Remove all wrapping papers, boxes, and other trash from the tree and fireplace areas immediately after the presents are opened.
- Do not burn wrapping paper in the fireplace. A flash fire may result as wrappings ignite suddenly and burn intensely. Gift wrapping creates hot, large flames that can ignite creosote deposits in the chimney and cause a fire.





CHRISTMAS TREE SAFETY TIPS

AFTER THE HOLIDAYS

Taking down the Christmas tree is not nearly as much fun as putting it up. However, the longer a tree stays up, the greater the fire hazard it becomes.

- It is best to discard live trees within one month after purchase.
- When Christmas is over or the tree begins to drop needles, dispose of it.
- Do not store live trees in the house or garage.
- Dispose of trees at a tree recycling center or have yours hauled away by a community pick-up service. If you live in a rural area where there is no tree recycling or pick-up programs, contact local authorities for a recommended means of disposal.
- Never burn Christmas trees or evergreen branches or needles in a fireplace or wood stove. Firs and pines have a lot of sap, which can explode. Needles burn like tinder.

Source of data about fires: National Fire Protection Association (NFPSA, DWC 2022).

For more holiday safety tips, visit NFPSA's Winter Holidays Public Education website.

