



## *Holiday Fire Safety*

The Anaheim Fire Department recommends the following fire safety guidelines to help ensure a safe and happy holiday season.

### **Trees**

- ❖ When purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label that reads “fire resistant.” Although this label does not guarantee it won’t catch fire, it does indicate the tree will resist burning and should extinguish quickly.
- ❖ When purchasing a live tree, check for freshness using the following indicators:
  - ◆ A fresh tree is green, with needles that are hard to pull from branches.
  - ◆ When bent between your fingers, the needles on a fresh tree will not break.
  - ◆ The trunk butt of a fresh tree is sticky with resin.
  - ◆ When the trunk of a fresh tree is tapped on the ground, very few needles will fall off.
- ❖ Do not rely entirely on chemical coatings or sprays to flameproof your tree. Any cut tree, even those treated with flame retardant, will still dry out. Daily care and watering help a tree remain relatively fire resistant longer.
- ❖ Cut approximately 2 inches off the trunk of the tree before mounting it in a sturdy stand with widespread legs that will hold an adequate supply of water. To prevent tipping, very large trees should be fastened to walls or the ceiling with thin guide wires.
- ❖ When setting up a tree at home, place it away from fireplaces, radiators or other sources of heat. Make sure it’s out of the way of day-to-day traffic and doesn’t block doorways. If possible, position the tree near an outlet so that electrical cords are not running long distances.
- ❖ After securing the tree, immediately fill the holder base with water. Refill with water daily or whenever the supply is low. Keep in mind that heated rooms dry live trees out rapidly, creating fire hazards.
- ❖ Remove your tree promptly after the holidays. An ignited tree can be completely consumed by fire in 3 to 5 seconds and generate over 2000 degrees of radiant heat, making a dried-out tree a serious fire hazard.





## Lights

The leading type of equipment involved in the ignition of trees are lights, cords and plugs. When using lights to decorate your tree or home this holiday season, please follow these simple rules:

- ❖ Indoors or outdoors, use only lights that have been tested for safety by a recognized testing laboratory, which indicates conformance with safety standards. Use only lights that have fused plugs.
- ❖ Check each set of lights, new or old, for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections, and throw out damaged sets. Always replace burned-out bulbs promptly with the same wattage bulbs.
- ❖ Use no more than three standard-size sets of lights per single extension cord. Make sure the extension cord is rated for the intended use.
- ❖ Never use electric lights on a metallic tree. The tree can become charged with electricity from faulty lights, and a person touching a branch could be electrocuted.
- ❖ Before using lights outdoors, check labels to be sure they have been certified for outdoor use.
- ❖ Fasten outdoor lights securely to trees, house walls, or other firm supports to protect the lights from wind damage. Use only insulated staples to hold strings in place (not nails or tacks), or run strings of lights through hooks.
- ❖ Turn off all lights when you go to bed or leave the house. The lights could short out and start a fire.
- ❖ For added electric shock protection, plug outdoor electric lights and decorations into circuits protected by ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). Portable outdoor GFCIs can be purchased where electrical supplies are sold. A qualified electrician can install GFCIs permanently to household circuits.

## Decorations

- ❖ Use only non-combustible or flame-resistant materials to trim a tree. Choose tinsel or artificial icicles of plastic or nonleaded metals. Leaded materials are hazardous if ingested by children.
- ❖ Never use lighted candles on a tree or near other evergreens. Always use non-flammable holders, and place candles where they will not be knocked down. Never place lit candles in windows, where blinds and curtains can close over them.
- ❖ Store candles, matches, and lighters up high, out of children's sight and reach, preferably in a locked cabinet.
- ❖ In homes with small children, take special care to avoid decorations that are sharp or breakable. Keep trimmings with small removable parts out of the reach of children to avoid a child swallowing or inhaling small pieces, and avoid trimmings that resemble candy or food that may tempt a child to eat them.