



Monterey County Fire and Arson Task Force
Monterey County Fire Investigators Association
www.mcfia.org



PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

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Christmas trees are a wonderful addition to a holiday season but can lead to a dangerous situation if not cared for properly. From 2003-2007, a yearly average of 250 home fires started with Christmas trees. These fires caused an average of 14 deaths, 26 injuries, and \$13.8 million in property damage. On average, one of every 18 reported home Christmas tree fires resulted in a death. Fortunately, Christmas tree fires are not common but can be very serious and have disastrous results.

To have a safe holiday season, please follow these important safety tips about Christmas trees:

- ❖ Do not purchase a tree that is already dry or dropping needles.
- ❖ Place your tree in a sturdy tree stand designed not to tip over.
- ❖ Keep live trees moist by giving them plenty of water daily.
- ❖ When decorating your tree, always use lights that are in good working order and free of defects. Follow the manufacturer's instructions on how to use tree lights.
- ❖ Connect no more than three strands of lights together designed for indoor use.
- ❖ Always unplug tree lights before leaving home or going to bed.
- ❖ Never use candles to decorate a tree. Make sure any lit candles in the room are well away from tree branches.
- ❖ Make sure the tree is at least three feet away from any heat source such as a fireplace or heater.
- ❖ Children are fascinated with Christmas trees. Keep a watchful eye on children when around the tree and do not let them play with the wiring or lights.
- ❖ Lastly, safely recycle your tree when it begins dropping needles or as soon as possible after Christmas. Dried-out trees are highly flammable and should not be left in the house or garage.

To view a Christmas tree safety video produced by the Monterey County Fire Investigators Association, go to http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dxauj_rfkN4.

For more information on Christmas tree safety, general holiday safety tips, and the importance of having smoke detectors in your home, contact your local fire department or check out the website of the National Fire Protection Association at www.nfpa.org

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