

Deck the halls safely this holiday season

KEEP THE SEASON SAFER BY FOLLOWING SAFETY TIPS TO PREVENT DECORATIONS FROM STARTING A HOME FIRE.

Overloaded circuits and sparks can be significant safety issues this time of year. According to the National Fire Protection Association, U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated 835 home structure fires each year that started with decorations other than Christmas trees. These fires cause an annual average of three civilian fire deaths, 30 civilian fire injuries, and around \$14 million in direct property damage. Further, electrical distribution or lighting equipment was involved in more than two in five home Christmas tree fires.

This holiday season is a good time to ensure you have smoke alarms on each level of your home. Test them once a month and replace the batteries regularly. Also, develop and practice a home safety plan so everyone knows what to do in a fire or other emergency.

HERE ARE SOME THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN DECORATING YOUR HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS:

Choose decorations that are **flame-resistant or flame-retardant**.

Make sure you use indoor and outdoor lights for their **intended purposes**.

Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections.

Follow the manufacturer's instructions.

If you use a real tree, select one with **fresh, green needles** that don't fall off when touched.

Keep the tree **at least 3 feet away** from any heat sources and out of the way of exits.

Add water to the tree **every day**.

Don't use lit candles to decorate the tree.

Look for a **fire-resistant** label on artificial trees.