

PRESS RELEASE

St. Charles Fire Department



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Fire Prevention is the Key to a Safe and Joyous Holiday Season

For Immediate Release

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Each year fires that occur during the holiday season claim the lives of over 400 people and injure over 1600 more causing over \$990 million in damages. The City of St. Charles Fire Department would like to share some fire safety tips to help insure that all of us have a safe and happy Holiday.

Tree Safety:

Live trees must have needles that are hard to pull off and do not break. The trunk should feel sticky to the touch. Dry trees can be identified by banging the trunk on the ground. The tree may be a fire hazard if a large amount of needles fall off. The tree should be watered daily and kept away from heat sources such as fireplaces, vents, or space heaters. Never place tree limbs or needles in a fireplace or wood burning stove.

Lights:

Dispose of any light strands that have frayed wires, gaps in insulation, broken sockets or excessive kinking. Only use lights that have been approved for use by a recognized test lab that proves conformance with safety standards. Connect no more than three (3) light strands together at a time per extension cord. Wires should not be warm to the touch, and do not leave any lights on unattended. Use insulated staples or hooks to hang lights. Do not use nails or tacks. Make sure all outdoor lights are secure to prevent wind from damaging the wires. Use ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) when plugging in lighting for added protection.

Decorations:

Make sure that your artificial tree or other Holiday decorations are marked as flame retardant or non flammable. Keep all decorations away from any heat source. Do not place wrapping paper in a fireplace or wood burning stove. The paper will burn too rapidly and may induce a chimney fire. Avoid using lit candles. If you use candles keep them away from any combustibles and never leave a lit candle unattended. Make sure they are in stable holders and cannot be easily knocked over.

Test your smoke detector monthly and practice an escape plan.

For further assistance or questions you may contact Fire Chief Ernie Rhodes' office at (636-949-3250).