

Christmas trees and other decorations are a source of joy during the holidays, but can become deadly if care isn't taken in their selection and upkeep.

The NH State Fire Marshal's Office offers these tips to keep your home filled with yuletide joy and safe from fire as well.

#### \*\*\*\*\* NATURAL TREES \*\*\*\*\*

It is important to buy a freshly cut tree. Beware of any tree with brittle or shedding needles.

If you buy a tree early and plan to store it, keep it in a cool place and set the tree base in water. Be sure to cut off one inch of the tree base to help water absorption. Always place the tree in a sturdy non-tipping stand. Young children are attracted to the tree by the glittering decorations and usually will attempt to touch them. A small sturdy string wrapped around the tree about midway and tacked to the wall will prevent injury to a curious child who might pull on the tree.

#### \*\*\*\*\* ARTIFICIAL TREES \*\*\*\*\*

When buying an artificial tree, look for a tag from a recognized testing laboratory to insure that the tree is fire-resistant. Many artificial trees are made of metal. Remember: Only indirect lighting should be used on this type of tree. Metal is a conductor of

electricity and can be a potential shock hazard if you use direct lighting attached to a metal tree.

#### \*\*\*\*\* TREE LIGHTING \*\*\*\*\*

Inspect last year's lights closely before you use them. Look carefully for worn insulation, loose bulb sockets or broken plugs. If they are damaged, don't take the risk — Replace them.

Don't place extension cords in foot traffic areas such as through doorways or under rugs. Walking and vacuuming over the cord will fray the insulation, resulting in a short circuit in the wire and a possible fire.

For outdoor lighting, use only electrical equipment that has been approved by a recognized testing laboratory specifically for outside use.

Avoid using combustible decorations on or near the tree. Untreated cotton batting, block tissue paper and some foamed plastics catch fire easily. Natural evergreens are a popular decoration around the home, but remember that these decorations and your tree should be kept away from heat sources such as appliances, woodstoves, heaters, etc.

Christmas tree lights create heat and additional heat near your natural tree can accelerate the natural drying out of your tree. Lights on trees should be

turned off when you leave your home or go to bed at night.

#### \*\*\*\*\* PUBLIC BUILDINGS \*\*\*\*\*

The NH State Fire Marshal's Office publishes a Christmas tree regulations flyer every year for those citizens wanting to have Christmas trees in public buildings. Please call the office for a copy.

#### \*\*\*\*\* FLAME-PROOFING \*\*\*\*\*

At the present time there is no method approved by the NH State Fire Marshal's Office that will effectively flame retard a natural tree. You should be wary of claims by companies selling products that claim to "fire-proof" your natural tree.

**\*\*\*\*\*SMOKE DETECTORS\*\*\*\*\***

Regardless of the holiday season, everyone should have a working smoke detector in his or her home on every level. The risk of death by fire increases dramatically in homes where smoke detectors are either not present or not working. Recent research has also determined that the life expectancy of a smoke detector (AC powered or battery) is only about ten years. If the smoke detectors in your home are older than ten years, we recommend that they be changed regardless of how they are working.

The men and women of the NH State Fire Marshal's Office would like to wish you and your family a joyous holiday season. If you would like additional information about holiday safety, please contact your local fire department or call the NH State Fire Marshal's Office at the number listed on the back of this brochure.



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**KEEPING  
THE HOLIDAY  
FIRE SAFE**



**TIPS FOR KEEPING YOUR  
HOLIDAY SAFE**

**FROM THE  
NEW HAMPSHIRE**

**STATE FIRE MARSHAL'S  
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