

# HOLIDAY & DECOR SAFETY



The holiday season is a joyous time, filled with beautifully decorated trees, and houses draped in festive lights. But every year, dry Christmas trees, holiday lights, and candles cause hundreds of house fires.

The Los Angeles County Fire Department has a few tips on keeping you, your family, and your home safe during the holidays.

## Holiday Lights



- Always maintain your holiday lights. Before hanging your lights every year, check for frayed wires, bare spots, gaps in the insulation, broken or cracked sockets, and excessive kinking or wear.
- Unless the directions state it is safe to do so, do not link more than three light strands.
- Periodically check the wires; they should not be warm to the touch.
- Do not leave holiday lights on unattended.

## Holiday Decorations

- Use only nonflammable decorations or flame-retardant ones. Decorations should always be placed or hung away from any heat source.
- Make sure that your tree or any of your decorations do not block an exit way. If a fire occurs, a blocked exit way could put you and your family at risk.
- Never put wrapping paper in the fireplace. It could cause a very large fire, throwing off dangerous embers and sparks that could result in a chimney fire.

## Candle Care

- Never leave a burning candle unattended. Consider using battery-operated candles instead.
- If you use lit candles, never place them on a tree. Place them in a stable candle holder.
- Keep candles at least 12 inches away from all flammable materials, decorations, and wrapping paper.
- Make sure to keep lit candles away from children and in an area where they cannot be blown or knocked over.



## Christmas Tree Safety



- There are many alternatives to fresh trees. Many of the artificial trees are fire-resistant. If you buy one, look for a statement that specifies this protection.
- If you decide to buy a real tree, make sure to determine the freshness of your tree. A fresh tree will stay green longer and be less of a fire hazard than a dry tree.

### To Check for a Tree's Freshness, Remember:

- A fresh tree is green.
- Fresh needles are hard to pull from branches.
- When bent between your fingers, fresh needles do not break.
- The trunk of a fresh tree is sticky with resin.
- When the trunk of a tree is bounced on the ground, a shower of falling needles shows that the tree is too dry.

### When Setting Up a Tree...

- Place it away from fireplaces, radiators, and other heat sources. Heated rooms dry out trees quickly, producing a fire hazard.
- Use thin guy-wires to secure a large tree to walls or the ceiling.
- Make sure to keep fresh trees in a sturdy, water-holding base.
- Prevent the tree from drying out by keeping the stand filled with water as long as it is indoors.



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