



Klamath County Fire District No. 1

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PRESS RELEASE

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Christmas Tree Safety

Christmas trees account for 240 fires annually, 16 deaths, 25 injuries and 13 million dollars in property damages. Follow these simple tips to help prevent a Christmas tree fire in your home:

When picking a tree, always choose a fresh tree with a natural, deep-green in color and flexible needles. Hold the end of the branch (6 inches) and glide it through your hand. The needles should slide through your hand without coming off. Fold a needle back until the tip touches the stem making a circle. The needle should not break, but should bounce back into its original shape. For a cut tree, bang the stump end on the ground. A fresh cut tree should not lose its green needles.

Once you have chosen your tree: cut the stump approximately 2 inches in a diagonal cut, which will provide the tree with better water absorption by opening the pores which have been clogged by tree sap.

When setting up your tree be sure to place it in an area away from heating sources, such as radiators, heating ducts, fireplaces and even your television. Do not block any door or window leading to the outside.

Watering your Christmas tree everyday is extremely important, especially in the first few days of moving your tree into your heated home. Christmas trees drink on average four liters of water everyday. Do not let the water level go below the cut of your tree; this will cause the pores to clog with tree sap. There are several products that claim to be fire retardant for your tree, as well as many “fireproof” recipes containing cleaning chemicals on the internet. Please do not use these products: they don’t work and they can be really dangerous by the fumes produced or by killing your tree. Klamath County Fire District No 1’s Fire Marshal Jim Kenworthy uses the following recipe to a fire retardant tree.

- Mix 1 cup table sugar with 4 cups of cold tap water.
- Refill the tree stand daily with the sugar solution.
- After about 24 hours in the sugar water, the tree will be fire retardant.
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Chief Kenworthy also suggests adding 1 adult aspirin for each foot of height to the tree stand water base when the tree is first installed in the stand, to help the tree stay green and not drop as many needles.

Decorating your Christmas tree takes time to make it look perfect, before you string your lights, make sure they are UL (Underwriter’s Laboratories, Inc) approved and free of broken or cracked bulbs, and frayed or bare wires. Miniature lights are the preferred choice to light your tree, they are cooler than the standard sized bulbs and do not dry out the needles as quick as their alternative. Follow the instructions/warnings that come with your lights and use no more than 3 sets of lights per extension. Always turn off the lights when you leave your house and before you go to sleep.