

Christmas Tree Safety



As you deck the halls this holiday season, be fire smart. A small fire that spreads to a Christmas tree can grow large very quickly.



PICKING THE TREE

- » Choose a tree with fresh, green needles that do not fall off when touched.



PLACING THE TREE

- » Before placing the tree in the stand, cut 1–2" from the base of the trunk.
- » Make sure the tree is at least three feet away from any heat source, like fireplaces, radiators, candles, heat vents or lights.
- » Make sure the tree is not blocking an exit.
- » Add water to the tree stand. Be sure to add water daily.

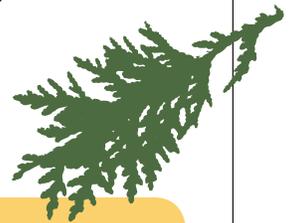


LIGHTING THE TREE

- » Use lights that have the label of an independent testing laboratory. Some lights are only for indoor or outdoor use.
- » Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Connect no more than three strands of mini string sets and a maximum of 50 bulbs for screw-in bulbs. Read manufacturer's instructions for number of LED strands to connect.
- » Never use lit candles to decorate the tree.
- » Always turn off Christmas tree lights before leaving home or going to bed.

After Christmas

Get rid of the tree after Christmas or when it is dry. Dried-out trees are a fire danger and should not be left in the home or garage, or placed outside against the home. Check with your local community to find a recycling program. Bring outdoor electrical lights inside after the holidays to prevent hazards and make them last longer.



FACTS

- ! **One** of every three home Christmas tree fires are caused by electrical problems.
- ! Although Christmas tree fires are not common, when they do occur, they have a higher chance to be deadly.
- ! A heat source too close to the tree causes **one in every five** of the fires.



Your Source for SAFETY Information

NFPA Public Education Division • 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169

www.nfpa.org/education



FACT SHEET » RESEARCH

Home Christmas Tree Fires

U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated annual average of 200 home¹ structure fires that began with Christmas trees in 2011–2015. These fires caused an annual average of 6 civilian deaths, 16 civilian injuries, and \$14.8 million in direct property damage.

Although Christmas tree fires are not common, when they do occur, they are much more likely to be deadly than most other fires.

- ▶ On average, one out of every 32 reported home Christmas tree fires resulted in a death, compared to an average of one death per 143 reported home fires.

Four of every five Christmas tree fires occurred in December or January.

- ▶ More than two of every five Christmas tree fires (42%) happened in December. More than one-third (37%) were in January.

Leading causes of Christmas tree fires

Electrical distribution or lighting equipment was involved in two of every five (40%) home Christmas tree fires.

- ▶ Decorative lights were involved in 18%.
- ▶ Wiring or related equipment was involved in 13%.
- ▶ Cords or plugs were involved in 6%.

Electrical failures or malfunctions were factors in one-quarter (25%) of Christmas tree fires. Any type of equipment that uses electricity can have an electrical failure.

One-quarter (24%) of Christmas tree fires were intentional. Almost half (48%) of these intentional fires occurred in January.

Heating equipment was involved in 15% of the Christmas tree fires.

6% of Christmas tree fires were started by someone playing with fire.

Candles started 8% of home Christmas tree structure fires.

- ▶ In one-quarter (26%) of the Christmas tree fires and in 80% of the deaths, a type of heat source, such as a candle or equipment, was too close to the tree.

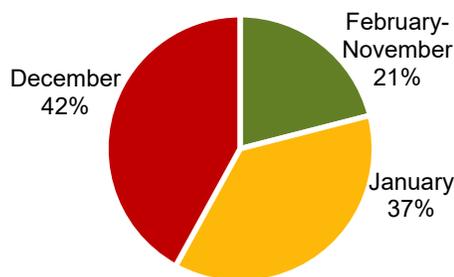
Leading areas of origin

More than one-third (37%) of home Christmas tree fires started in a living room, family room, or den. All of the fatalities and roughly three-quarters (72%) of the injuries resulted from fires started in these areas.

6% were chimney or flue fires.

To learn more about holiday safety, see NFPA's [Winter Holiday Safety Tips](#).

Home structure fires in which Christmas trees were first ignited, by month: 2011-2015



¹Homes include one- or two-family homes and apartments or other multi-family housing.

**Source: NFPA Research: www.nfpa.org/research
Contact information: 617-984-7450 or research@nfpa.org**



NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION
The leading information and knowledge resource on fire, electrical and related hazards

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