

Eliminate Problems with the Holiday Tree

The tree with all its trimmings is the centre of the Christmas holidays for many Canadians. With holiday tunes playing in the background, a nice warm fire in the fireplace and hot chocolate in a mug, decorating the tree is a cherished pastime for many families. Keep your tree safe and well cared for during the festive season.

Choosing the Tree

- Consider switching to an artificial tree. They are less of a fire hazard
- When purchasing live cut trees or greens, carefully inspect the needles. If they are brown or break easily, the greenery is not fresh and poses a greater fire risk.
- Test for freshness by bending a few needles in half. If they snap in two, the tree is dry....look for one on which the needles spring back to their original shape.

Erecting the Tree

- Put your tree in a sturdy, non-tip stand.
- Keep cut trees supplied with water at all times as dehydrated trees can catch fire more easily.
- Make sure the tree is at least one metre away from any flame or heat source.
- Try to position the tree near an outlet so that cords are not running long distances.
- Do not place the tree where it blocks an exit.

Decorating the Tree

- Never decorate the tree with candles.
- Inspect electrical lights and extension cords for wear and tear and replace any cords that are beginning to fray or have broken sockets.
- Use only light sets that have been certified by a recognized testing and certification organization such as CSA (Canadian Standards Association).
- Do not overload the circuit by stringing too many cords together at a single outlet.
- Unplug all lights - inside and out- before going to bed or leaving home.

Disposing of the Tree

- Safely dispose of the tree when it begins dropping needles.
- Dried-out trees are flammable and should not be left inside the home or garage, or placed against the house.

Additional Safety Tips

Make sure your home is equipped with working smoke alarms and fire extinguishers. Do not forget to install and maintain these devices in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.

Develop and practise a fire escape plan for your household and ensure overnight guests are familiar with your procedures.