

T’is the Season for Holiday Fire Safety Tips

The provincial Fire Marshal is asking Nova Scotian’s to be extra careful with electricity, open flames and other sources of heat while celebrating this joyous holiday season.

Picking out a safe Christmas tree:

Christmas trees add to spirit of the holiday by providing the ambiance, beauty and scent of the season. If you are buying a real Christmas tree always choose a freshly cut tree. To determine whether a tree is fresh, bang the stump on a firm surface two or three times to see how many needles fall off. The outside green needles should not fall off in large numbers.

Tree Care:

Once you have chosen your perfect holiday tree, make a fresh, angled cut across the stump of the tree at least two inches above the old cut. Place the tree in a sturdy stand that is capable of holding at least a gallon of water and make sure the water level is checked daily. Always place your tree and combustible materials such as wrapping paper away from sources of heat such as radiators, fireplaces, wood stoves, television sets, computer monitors. As well, ensure the tree does not block an exit.

Light Safety:

Remember before you decorate tree check your lights for frayed or cracked wires or broken sockets. Do not attempt to repair a worn light set. Throw it away and purchase a new replacement. When replacing bulbs ensure the replacement matches the original and is approved for that use.

Always use CSA approved lights, extension cords and non-combustible decorations. Do not use outdoor lights and cords inside your home and avoid running your extension cords through door jambs or under carpets. Never leave your lights on or candles lit while you’re out of the room or sleeping.

Decoration Safety Tips:

Decorating you home outdoors also adds to the spirit of the holidays. Outdoor lights and equipment should be fed from a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) outlet. Never use nails or tacks that penetrate the insulation to support lights, instead use plastic hooks or insulated staples where possible. Finally, outdoor lights should be installed with the bulbs hanging down to prevent moisture from accumulating in them.

Tree disposal after the holidays:

When you're ready to get rid of your tree, please do not burn it in the fireplace or wood stove. The rapid burning and excessive heat can damage the firebox and chimney creating a serious fire hazard. Instead, find out from your municipality the day when trees will be picked at your curbside. Many municipalities recycle Christmas trees into mulch.

Final Safety Reminders:

Remember to test your smoke alarm on a weekly basis during the holiday season. Fire extinguishers, escape ladders, smoke alarms, emergency kits and flash lights also make great holiday gifts.

For more information on holiday fire safety please contact the Office of the Fire Marshal at 424-5721.