



Township of Maplewood

MAPLEWOOD, NEW JERSEY 07040

FIRE DEPARTMENT

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HOLIDAY FIRE SAFETY

Each year emergency rooms treat people for injuries, such as falls, cuts and electrical shocks, related to holiday lights, decorations and Christmas trees. In addition, Christmas trees are involved in numerous fires annually, resulting in death, injury and property loss. In order to increase holiday safety, the following information is provided.

- When purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label “Fire Resistant”. Although this label does not mean the tree won’t catch fire, it does indicate the tree will resist burning and should extinguish quickly.
- When purchasing a live tree, check for freshness. A fresh tree is green, needles are hard to pull from branches and when bent between your fingers, needles do not break. The trunk butt of a fresh tree is sticky with resin, and when tapped on the ground, the tree should not lose many needles.
- When setting up a tree at home, place it away from fireplaces and radiators. Since heated rooms dry live trees out rapidly, be sure to keep the stand filled with water. Place the tree out of the way of traffic and do not block doorways.
- Indoors or outside, use only lights that have been tested by a recognized testing laboratory, which indicates conformance with safety standards. Check each set of lights for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections, and throw out damaged sets.
- Always unplug all lights before leaving home or going to sleep and do not overload electrical outlets.
- Never use electric lights on a metallic tree. The tree can become charged with electricity from faulty lights, and a person touching a tree branch could be electrocuted.
- Use only non-combustible or flame resistant materials to trim a tree.
- Never use lighted candles on a tree or near evergreens. Always use non-flammable holders, and place candles where they will not be knocked down. Do not leave children unattended in a room with lit candles. Do not display lighted candles in windows or near exits in case you need these to escape.

- Do not burn wrapping papers in the fireplace. A flash fire may result as wrappings ignite and burn intensely.
- When cooking, remember to keep an eye on the stove or oven. Unattended cooking is the leading cause of home fires in the United States.
- If there are smokers around your home provide plenty of deep ashtrays and check them frequently. Cigarette butts can smolder and cause a trash fire, so completely douse them with water before discarding.
- Keep matches and lighters out of the sight and reach of children.

Remember that smoke detectors provide early warning of a fire, allowing extra time to escape and as a result, substantially reducing the risk of injury and/or death in a residential fire. Smoke detectors should be located outside each separate sleeping area and on every floor of one's home including the basement. A few minutes should be spent each and every month to test smoke detectors to ensure they are operational.