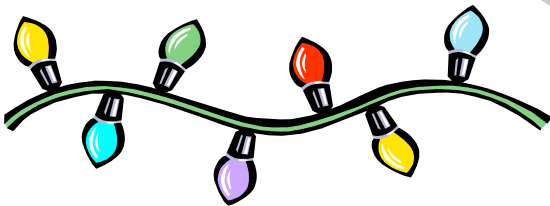




HOLIDAY DECORATING, FESTIVE AND SAFE

With the holiday season upon us, the San Bernardino County Fire Department reminds you of the following holiday decorating and natural Christmas tree safety tips to help keep this season safe and joyous.



CHECK THE LIGHTS, CHECK THE CORDS

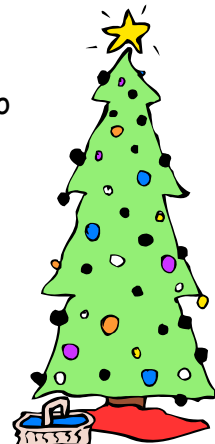
Before you put up any electrically lighted or operated decorations, you should check the equipment to make sure it will operate safely. Check for damaged equipment, burned-out lights, empty sockets and broken bulbs. Inspect wires carefully for breaks, fraying and damaged connections before installing or energizing your holiday decorations. Any damaged components should be thrown out and replaced. Look for the Underwriters Laboratory (UL) label to assure safe electrical equipment.

ARTIFICIAL OR NATURAL TREE?

Many consider artificial trees, in general, to be safer than natural trees, but both can be enjoyed safely. If you use an artificial tree, make sure it is made of safe, fireproof materials. If your artificial tree is pre-lit, check carefully for burnt-out, broken or damaged light sockets before using the tree.

MAKE A FRESH CUT

If you use a natural tree, make a fresh 1-inch cut at the base to open up pores clogged by sap. The fresh cut surface should be creamy-white so that the tree will be able to drink water.



PUT IN WATER

For a natural tree, choose a sturdy stand that holds at least one gallon of water. Rinse the stand with a mixture of one capful of bleach and one cup of water before inserting the tree. This rinsing reduces the growth of microorganisms that can block the tree's ability to absorb water. If the tree is not going into the house soon after purchase, it should be stored in a bucket of water in a cool place away from wind and sun.

WATER DAILY

An average natural tree may consume between a quart and a gallon of water per day. If the water level drops below the cut end of the trunk, a seal will form and no more water will be absorbed- **so don't forget to water the tree every day!**

MINI-LIGHTS PRODUCE LESS HEAT

Miniature lights produce less heat and reduce drying on a natural tree. Always check lights for frayed or cracked wiring and broken sockets before placing on a tree. Do not attempt to repair a worn light—throw it away! Turn off tree lights when leaving the house or before going to bed. Avoid overloading circuits. Plug no more than three light sets into a single outlet.

KEEP AWAY FROM HEAT SOURCES

Place the tree away from heat sources: heating vents, fireplaces, wood stoves, radiators, T.V. sets, or sunny windows. Keep rearranged furniture away from heat sources as well. Be careful not to block a door with the tree or with rearranged furniture.

REMOVE AND RECYCLE THE TREE PROMPTLY



After the holidays, remove a natural tree from the house as soon as possible. Never burn any part of a Christmas tree in a wood stove or fireplace; it burns too fast and is explosive! The best alternative is to RECYCLE your tree through your local city or county program.

*Have a festive and **SAFE** holiday season!*