

## Bend Fire officials remind citizens: 'Tis the season for fire safety

by Bend\_Weekly\_News\_Sources

Each year in the United States, fires occurring during the holiday season claim the lives of over 400 people, injure 1,650 more, and cause over \$990 million in property damage. Bend Fire & Rescue would like to take this opportunity to remind community members of a few basic fire and life safety precautions to help keep the holidays merry and bright for all:

**Christmas Trees:** Choose a fresh tree "one with needles that are green, difficult to pull off the branch, and do not break easily. If a lot of needles fall off when the tree is handled, it means that the tree is dry and should be avoided. Care for your tree by cutting about an inch off the end of the tree before putting it in water, and keep the tree away from heat sources, such as fireplaces and heat vents. Keep the tree stand filled with water at all times "this might mean giving it water more than once per day!

**Holiday Lights:** Before putting up your lights each year, inspect for frayed wires, cracked sockets, loose plugs, or worn insulation. Discard any light strings which are damaged. Use only UL approved lighting, and never use indoor lights outside! Unplug your lights when leaving the house or before going to bed.

**Holiday Plants & Decorations:** Keep decorations away from heat sources, and watch for potential choking hazards for both kids and pets. Also, watch where you place holiday plants. Poinsettia leaves, if ingested, can make a person or pet very sick, and ingesting holly or mistletoe can be fatal!

**Candles:** Candle use has risen greatly in the past decade, but unfortunately, so have candle-related fires! Most of the candle fires occur when they are left burning unattended. Extinguish all candles prior to leaving a room or going to bed. Keep candles at least 12 inches away from anything that can burn, such as clothing, curtains, furniture, greenery, or decorations. Avoid candles with combustible items such as twigs, flowers, or leaves embedded in them. Always use a sturdy non-combustible candleholder, and keep candles out of reach of children and pets.

**Heating & Cooking:** Remember, all heating appliances (including the kitchen stove) need space around them. Keep a minimum of three feet of clearance around all heat-producing appliances, and create a kid and pet free zone around the kitchen stove to prevent burn injuries. Never leave cooking unattended on the stove, and keep all combustible materials such as curtains, paper towels, and food packaging away from stoves, toasters, and coffee makers.

The very best advice this holiday season is to have working smoke alarms in your home and create a home fire escape plan. For more information on smoke alarms, home fire escape planning, or holiday safety, contact the fire agency in your area. Residents of Bend may call Bend Fire & Rescue at 541-322-6309.

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