



St. Tammany
Fire Protection District No. 1
1358 Corporate Square
P.O. Box 1149
Slidell, Louisiana 70458

Holiday Fire Safety Press Release

Christmas decorations that brighten your season also increase the risk of an unwanted fire and injury. St. Tammany Fire District #1 makes the following recommendations to lessen these risks.

Outdoor Safety Tips:

- * To reduce the risk of electrical shock when hanging holiday lights, use a dry wooden ladder and insulated staples that are hammered in rather than a staple gun.
- * Waterproof all electrical connections and keep them elevated so rain water will not drain into the connection and possibly cause a shock or short circuit.
- * Avoid standing in water while handling electrical wiring or when using power tools.
- * Shut off electrical power when replacing bulbs and electricity off while putting up and taking down holiday lighting.
- * Always use an extension cord that has a three (3) pronged plug (which is extension cord with a ground wire) that is approved by Underwriters Laboratory for outdoor use.
- * NEVER allow the bulbs to touch combustible material, such as plastics, leaves, grass, or pine needles.

Indoor Safety Tips:

- * Avoid buying Christmas trees with shedding needles as it is a sign that the tree is dry and a greater fire risk
- * Cut two (2) inches from the base of the tree trunk so it can better absorb water.
- * Keep tree outdoors in a bucket of water for a few days before bringing it indoors to insure the tree has absorbed enough moisture to stay fresher. This will make it less of a fire hazard.
- * Install tree away from all heat sources, open flames and exits

- * Replace any light string that has frayed or broken wires, loose connections, or broken or cracked sockets.
- * DO NOT overload extension cords, adapters, or outlets. Only one length of extension cord
- * DO NOT place electrical cords where they would pose a tripping hazard.
- * DO NOT place electrical cords under rugs or carpet as walking traffic can weaken the insulation and increase the risk of fire and electrical shock.
- * DO NOT hang electric lights from a metallic tree because damaged insulation could electrically charge the tree and cause a shock or fire. Instead use colored spotlights above or beside the tree, but never on the tree.
- * Always unplug the tree lights when you leave the house or go to bed.

St. Tammany Fire District #1 recommends all homes should have a working smoke detector in each bedroom and one working smoke detector on each level of the home. Detectors should be tested once a month and the batteries should be replaced every six months. St. Tammany Fire District #1 also strongly urges all residents to have a fire escape plan. Fire escape plans should have two ways for every member of the household to escape and designate a place for everyone to meet. Fire drills should be held once a month.

Fire Prevention... the single most effective strategy for reducing loss of life and property, through education, outreach and enforcement.