

## **News from the City of Dearborn**

*Discover Dearborn! Visit [www.WelcomeHomeDearborn.com](http://www.WelcomeHomeDearborn.com)*

John B. O'Reilly, Jr., Mayor

Department of Public Information

Mary Laundroche, Director

313-943-2285

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Nov. 29, 2007

### **Remember safety tips when dealing with holiday decorations**

**DEARBORN**, Mich. – The Dearborn Fire Department encourages the public to remember to stay safe when it comes to decorating your home for the holidays.

Decorations like candles, Christmas trees and lights add to the festive mood of the season, but improper use can result in fires, property damage, injuries and even fatalities.

For example, the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC) estimates that dried-out Christmas trees are involved in about 200 fires each year that result in 10 deaths and about \$10 million in property damage.

The Dearborn Fire Department offers these safety tips from the CPSC about holiday home decorations.

- 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 is more resistant to burning.
- When purchasing a live tree, check for freshness. A fresh tree is green, needles are hard to pull from branches and do not break when bent between your fingers. The bottom 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. Because heated rooms dry out live trees rapidly, be sure to keep the stand filled with water. Place the tree out of the way of traffic, and do not block doorways.
- Use only non-combustible or flame-resistant materials to trim a tree.
- Choose tinsel or artificial icicles of plastic or nonleaded metals. Leaded materials are hazardous if ingested by children.
- In homes with small children, take special care to avoid sharp or breakable decorations, keep trimmings with small removable parts out of the reach of children who could swallow or inhale small pieces, and avoid trimmings that resemble candy or food that may tempt a child to eat them.
- To avoid eye and skin irritation, wear gloves when decorating with spun glass "angel hair."
- To avoid lung irritation, follow container directions carefully while decorating with artificial snow sprays.
- Whether indoors or outside, use only lights that have been tested for safety by a nationally-recognized testing laboratory, such as UL or ETL/ITSNA. Use only newer lights that have thicker wiring and are required to have safety fuses to prevent the wires from overheating.

- Check each set of lights, new or old, for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections. Throw out damaged sets.
- If using an extension cord, make sure it is rated for the intended use.
- Never use electric lights on a metallic tree. The tree can become charged with electricity from faulty lights, and a person touching a branch could be electrocuted.
- When using lights outdoors, check labels to be sure they have been certified for outdoor use and only plug them into a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protected receptacles or a portable GFCI.
- Turn off all holiday lights when you go to bed or leave the house. The lights could short out and start a fire.
- Keep burning candles within sight.
- Keep lighted candles away from items that can catch fire and burn easily, such as trees, other evergreens, decorations, curtains and furniture.
- Always use non-flammable holders and keep away from children and pets.
- Extinguish all candles before you go to bed, leave the room or leave the house.
- Use care with "fire salts," which produce colored flames when thrown on wood fires. They contain heavy metals that, if eaten, can cause intense gastrointestinal irritation and vomiting. Keep them away from children.

- Do not burn wrapping paper or plastic items in the fireplace. These materials can ignite suddenly and burn intensely, resulting in a flash fire.
- Place a screen around your fireplace to prevent sparks from igniting nearby flammable materials.

You can get a free brochure with holiday decorating and toy safety tips at CPSC's web site: [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov).

\* \* \* \* \*

**MEDIA CONTACT: Mary Laundroche or Randy Coble, at (313) 943-2285**

fire, holiday decoration safety tips nov 2007