SAFETY

CHRISTMAS TREE SAFETY FACTS

- From 1980 to 2004, the number of fires involving all Christmas trees, real and artificial, has decreased dramatically.
- According to the NFPA, between 2009 – 2013, Christmas trees were cited as the first item ignited in fewer than 0.058% of all home structure fires.
- The leading causes of Christmas tree fires include:
  - Electrical distribution or lighting equipment – 38%
  - Intentional fires – 22%
  - Someone, usually a child, playing with fire – 9%
  - Candles – 8%

America’s Christmas tree producers and the National Christmas Tree Association are committed to consumers having an enjoyable and safe holiday experience with a fresh Christmas tree. The industry works closely with fire safety officials in providing tips to consumers on how to keep their Christmas tree fresh and well-hydrated through the holiday season.
Repeated tests have shown that it is very difficult to ignite a fresh evergreen with high moisture content. One of these tests, undertaken by NIST (National Institute of Standards and Technology), is described:

NIST researchers selected and cut a green Scotch pine, had an additional two inches cut from the trunk’s bottom, and placed the tree in a stand with at least a 7.6 liter water capacity. The researchers maintained the Scotch pine’s water daily. A single match could not ignite the tree. A second attempt in which an electric current ignited an entire matchbook failed to fire the tree. Finally they applied an open flame to the tree using a propane torch. The branches ignited briefly, but self-extinguished when the torch was removed from the branches. Trees that have been watered properly, and maintain pliable, green needles are harder to ignite than dry trees.

Results of tests conducted by National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) in 1999 and again in January 2007, indicate that a tree maintained in water will not support combustion when the source of ignition is removed. These results agree with many other tests conducted by other organizations over the years. [www.fire.nist.gov/tree_fire.htm](http://www.fire.nist.gov/tree_fire.htm)

Professional Christmas tree growers and retailers believe in educating consumers on the safe use of a fresh Christmas tree to promote holiday safety rather than the blazing tree often depicted in the media. In many of these demonstrations, the trees used are dry and sometimes accelerants are used to create the spectacular blaze. To see a sample of a “safety” demonstration using an accelerant, view this humorous video clip from the Tonight Show with Jay Leno; [www.realchristmastrees.org/dnn/Education/Holiday-Safety](http://www.realchristmastrees.org/dnn/Education/Holiday-Safety)

Safety Tips

- Select a tree in good condition.
- Make a fresh cut on the trunk and place in water within 6-8 hours.
- If necessary, store temporarily in water in a cool location.
- Display indoors in a secure stand with adequate water capacity – at least 1 quart for each inch of trunk diameter.

**THIS IS IMPORTANT!**

- Check the water daily and replenish as needed to maintain the water level above the base of the tree trunk.
- Display tree away from heat sources that may cause tree to dry.
- Only use lights that produce low heat and replace if wiring is worn or frayed.
- Do not overload electrical circuits.
- Monitor tree for freshness. If it becomes dry, remove it from home immediately and dispose of properly.