



OREGON

Theodore R. Kulongoski, Governor

Oregon State Police
Office of State Fire Marshal
4760 Portland Road NE
Salem, OR 97305-1760
(503) 378-3473
Fax (503) 373-1825 fax
TTY (503) 390-4661
E-mail: Oregon.sfm@state.or.us
www.sfm.state.or.us

December 11, 2008

For Immediate Release

Contact: Rich Hoover 503 934-8217 or 503 370-0033, pager

State Fire Marshal advises Oregonians to practice safety with holiday decorations

Acting State Fire Marshal Randy Simpson urges everyone to follow a few important fire safety tips to help ensure Christmas trees and other decorations are kept away from sources of heat. From 2003 through 2007 Oregon residential fires related to Christmas trees and decorative lighting resulted in seven injuries and an estimated \$1.4 million in property loss. Sources of heat causing these fires included open flames, overloaded wiring, heaters, woodstoves and fireplaces.

“During the holidays, anticipated joy turns to unexpected grief and loss for those hit by residential fires,” cautions Simpson. “While people love the smell and look of fresh trees and holiday decorations, this vegetation may become a serious fire hazard. Once ignited, a dry tree may be engulfed by flame in as fast as fifteen seconds and the heat will ignite other items in the room.”

Remember these tree care and decoration tips:

- **Choose a fresh, healthy tree with a deep-green color and flexible needles.**
- **Water daily.** A tree may consume between a quart and a gallon of water per day.
- **Place the tree at least three feet away from any heat source such as a fireplace, woodstove, heating duct or radiator.**
- **Keep lighted candles away from the tree.**
- **Use only non-combustible or flame resistant materials to trim a tree.**
- **Always unplug tree lights before leaving home or going to bed.**
- **If using a woodstove or fireplace, keep it screened at all times. Keep ribbons, boughs and other decorative materials at least three feet away.**
- **After the holiday season, promptly dispose of the tree and other greenery before it dries out.** Burning a tree in a stove or fireplace is dangerous; proper disposal includes recycling or pick-up by disposal service.

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General fire safety

- Make sure you have working smoke alarms on every level of your home, outside each sleeping area and in each bedroom.
- Make a family home fire escape plan and practice it with the whole family.
- Keep escape routes clear of clutter so you can escape quickly in case of fire.

For more information on fire safety go to:

http://www.oregon.gov/OSP/SFM/Home_Fire_Safety_Campaign.shtml.

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Note: Data furnished by the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal All Incident Reporting System on December 1, 2008. Estimated dollar loss is provided by firefighter on scene and may not reflect actual total loss, insurance settlement or loss of business.