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## OREGON

Kate Brown, Governor

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December 11, 2019

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### **Tips to Ensure a Safe and Memorable Holiday Season**

The arrival of colder weather and holiday activities in December provides opportunities to keep your homes and family fire safe so everyone can have memorable times when decorating and entertaining.

From 2014 through 2018, Oregon fire agencies reported there were 2,769 residential structure fires during the holiday period between November 22 and January 15. These fires were reported to have resulted in 24 deaths, 127 injuries, and more than \$68 million in property and content loss.

“The holiday season is a time when many Oregonians are enjoying families and friends in their homes and getting ready with decorating and other holiday traditions,” says State Fire Marshal Jim Walker. “Taking basic fire safe precautions will keep you and your loved ones safer from the dangers of fire and allow everyone to have a wonderful holiday experience.”

#### **Tree Care and Decorating Tips:**

- Choose a fresh, healthy holiday tree with a deep-green color and flexible needles.
- Water your tree daily — a tree may consume between a quart and a gallon of water per day.
- Make sure you have three feet between your holiday tree and any heating source.
- Ensure the tree is not blocking an exit, and that the decorations you use are flame resistant and flame retardant.
- Use only non-combustible or flame-resistant materials to trim a tree.

#### **Electrical Safety:**

- Maintain your holiday lights. Inspect holiday lights each year for frayed wires, bare spots, and broken or cracked sockets.
- Do not overload electrical sockets. Do not link more than three light strands, unless the manufacturer’s directions indicate it is safe.
- Protect electrical cords from damage. To avoid shock or fire hazards, cords should never be pinched by furniture, placed under rugs, located near heat sources, or attached by nails or staples.
- Make sure all extension cords and electrical decorations used outdoors are marked for outdoor use.

#### **Candle Safety:**

- Consider using battery-operated flameless candles, which can look and smell like real candles.
- Never leave a burning candle unattended. Extinguish candles when you go to bed, leave a room, or before leaving the house.

- Keep candles at least 12 inches away from anything that can burn. Keep candles at least one foot from combustibles including clothing, curtains, upholstered furniture, greenery, and decorations.
- Always use a sturdy non-combustible (metal, glass, or ceramic) candleholder. If a sturdy non-combustible candleholder is not available, the candle can be placed on a non-combustible plate.
- Place candles out of reach of small children and pets.
- Avoid candles with items embedded in them such as twigs, flowers, or leaves. These items can ignite or even explode.
- Always use a flashlight — not a candle — for emergency lighting.

**General Fire Safety:**

- Have working smoke alarms on every level of your home (including the basement), in each bedroom, and in the hallway outside each bedroom.
- If using a woodstove or fireplace, keep it screened at all times. Keep ribbons, boughs, and other decorative materials at least three feet away.
- Never burn wrapping paper in the fireplace or wood stove. Wrapping paper burns at higher temperatures than wood and can cause a chimney fire.
- Keep combustibles at least three feet from heat sources.
- Make a home fire escape plan and practice it with your family and any overnight guests.
- Keep escape routes clear of clutter so you can escape quickly in case of fire.

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