



## OREGON

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### **For Immediate Release**

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### **State fire marshal asks citizens to put fire safety at the top of their holiday list**

With the holiday season in full swing, State Fire Marshal Mark Wallace cautions everyone to keep fire safety in mind when decorating and entertaining.

“This season is a busy and exciting time of year, but don’t let that distract you from keeping your family and friends safe from fire,” says Wallace. “By following a few important safety tips for Christmas trees, decorations, and candles, you can help ensure your holidays remain happy.”

From 2008 through 2012, Oregon fires related to Christmas trees and decorations resulting in 107 fires, one death and more than \$2.3 million in property loss. Candle-related fires during this same period caused even more damage. From 2008 through 2012, there were 325 candle-related fires in Oregon causing four deaths, 49 injuries, and more than \$9.3 million in property loss.

#### **Tree care and decorating tips:**

- **Choose a fresh, healthy tree with a deep-green color and flexible needles.**
- **When you get the tree home, cut off the bottom two inches of the trunk.** This creates a fresh, raw cut for the tree to soak up water.
- **Water your tree 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, space heater, heating vent, or radiator.**
- **Keep lighted candles away from the tree.**
- **Use only noncombustible 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 or whenever your tree dries out promptly dispose of it and other dry greenery.** Burning a tree in a stove or fireplace is extremely dangerous; proper disposal includes recycling or pick-up by a disposal service.
- **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 directions indicate it is safe.

### **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 candle holder 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**

- Make sure you have working smoke alarms on every level of your home, outside each sleeping area, and in each bedroom.
- Make a 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 visit:

[http://www.oregon.gov/osp/SFM/pages/commed\\_firesafety\\_program.aspx](http://www.oregon.gov/osp/SFM/pages/commed_firesafety_program.aspx)