

Safety Fact Sheet



The Utah Safety Council cares about your safety outside of the work setting. We offer resources that keep you and your loved ones safe at home, at play and on the go.

O CHRISTMAS TREE, O CHRISTMAS TREE

It's time to deck the halls! Safely set the stage for holiday merriment by practicing these tips that cover you from selecting the perfect Christmas tree to trimming it with lights and baubles.



- **ARTIFICIAL OR REAL?** Artificial trees are great for anyone with allergies. They last for years, and are always the same size and fit. However, there is nothing like the scent of a real Christmas tree. Whichever you choose, here's how to make the most of your choice.
- **IF FRESH IS BEST.** Look for a tree with a healthy green coloring and few brown needles. Give the tree a shake and check the condition of the needles by gently bending them; if the tree is losing needles or they are snapping as you bend them, keep looking.
- **CUT LOOSE.** When you have selected the tree of your dreams, make a fresh, straight cut across the bottom of the trunk. Take off at least 2". This encourages the trunk to take up water.
- **TAKING IT HOME.** Once you have selected your tree, be sure to secure it for the journey home. The tree of your dreams could become the tree of your nightmares if it were to fall from your vehicle on the ride home.
- **DRINK IT IN!** Fresh trees need plenty of water. A tree can easily take up as much as a gallon of water every day. If the water level ever drops below the fresh cut, it will seal over and need a new cut. Keeping your tree well hydrated will help you avoid a holiday fire hazard. As National Institute of Standards and Technology fire safety engineers say: **REMEMBER, A WET TREE IS A SAFE TREE!**
- **LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION.** Do not place the tree within three feet of a radiator, space heater, fireplace or heat vent. The tree should not block windows and doors.
- **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE.** When purchasing an artificial tree, read the label to make sure it is fire retardant. While artificial trees are, overall, safer than real trees – they still pose a hazard in your home.
- **TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT.** Never place any tree – real or artificial – within three feet of a heat source, such as a fireplace or portable heater.
- **THE LOW DOWN.** Trim the lower branches to avoid eye injuries if you have small children or pets. Hang breakable ornaments or those that have small, detachable parts or metal hooks, or that look like candy on higher branches where young children can't get to them.
- **FLUFFY-PROOF IT.** Of course, cats are great tree climbers! And what could be better than when you bring the great outdoors indoors! Keep your tree upright by keeping pets out of your tree room.

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- **FIDO-PROOF IT.** Both cats and dogs can knock down and break glass ornaments and cut themselves. Put fragile ornaments on upper branches to avoid “paw-ventable” mishaps.
- **A TASTY SHOCK.** Pets may also injure themselves when they gnaw on electrical cords for Christmas-tree lights. Hide cords when possible. Or consider purchasing a pet-proof conduit which will enclose cords and wires.
- **TAME THE FLAME.** Keep candles away from your tree, decorations and other combustible materials.
- **LIGHTS OUT WHEN YOU'RE OUT.** Turn off tree and decorative lights when you go to bed or leave the house. Use only Underwriter’s Laboratory approved electrical decorations and extension cords.
- **MERRY AND BRIGHT.** Check all light sets for fraying, aging or heat damage. Discard any found to be problematic.
- **A ONE TO ONE CONNECTION.** Do not overload electrical outlets.
- **WHAT’S IN YOUR CHIMNEY?** Never burn Christmas-tree branches in your fireplace. It may cause a build-up of creosote, a highly flammable compound.
- **ONE-ON-ONE SUPERVISION.** Watch children when they are around the Christmas tree. Little fingers may pull at cords, lights and ornaments.
- **SAFE DISPOSAL.** When your tree starts dropping needles it is time to safely say goodbye. Do not place your tree inside your garage or against your house.