



EARTH WATCH CORPS

HOLIDAY HOME FIRES

Fast Facts

- Nearly 47,000 fires occur during the winter holidays claiming more than 500 lives, causing more than 2,200 injuries, and costing \$554 million in property damage.**
- On average, one of every 22 home fires started by Christmas trees result in death.***
- Candle fires are four times as likely to occur during the winter holidays.**
- During the winter holiday season, an average of 40 home fires per day are caused by children playing.**
- The number of home fires the American Red Cross has responded to has risen 10% since 2000.*
- Having a working smoke alarm reduces one's chances of dying in a fire by nearly half.**

Preparedness Tips

- ✓ Place Christmas trees, candles, and other holiday decorations at least three feet away from heat sources like fireplaces, portable heaters, radiators, heat vents and candles.
- ✓ Purchase flame retardant metallic or artificial trees. If you purchase a real tree, make sure that it has fresh, green needles that aren't easily broken. Keep live trees as moist as possible by giving them plenty of water.
- ✓ Make sure that light strings and other holiday decorations are in good condition. Do not use anything with frayed electrical cords and always follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- ✓ Always unplug tree and holiday lights before leaving home or going to bed.
- ✓ Never use lit candles to decorate a tree. Always extinguish candles before leaving the room or going to bed.
- ✓ Use only sturdy tree stands designed not to tip over. Keep curious pets and children away from Christmas trees.
- ✓ Keep anything that can catch on fire—pot holders, oven mitts, wooden utensils, paper or plastic bags, food packaging, and towels or curtains—away from your stove top.
- ✓ Designate one person to walk around your home to make sure that all candles and smoking materials are properly extinguished after guests leave.
- ✓ Smoke alarms save lives. Install a smoke alarm near your kitchen, on each level of your home, near sleeping areas, and inside and outside bedrooms if you sleep with doors closed. Use the test button to check it each month. Replace all batteries at least once a year.