

City of McKinney News Release FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

McKinney Fire Department provides Christmas tree safety tips

McKINNEY, Texas (Dec 07 2016) – The McKinney Fire Department (MFD) recommends residents protect themselves as they deck the halls this holiday season. A small fire that spreads to a Christmas tree or starts with a Christmas tree can grow large very quickly.

On average, 260 home fires begin with Christmas trees each year, resulting in 12 deaths, 24 injuries and \$16.4 million in property damage according to National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). An additional 150 home fires per year begin with holiday lights, candles and other decorative lighting, causing another eight deaths, 16 injuries and \$8.9 million in property damage each year.

“If you choose to use a real tree, water your tree daily,” said Deputy Fire Marshal Andrew Barr. “Most often, electrical shorts or open flames from candles start tree fires. Dry and neglected trees are the most vulnerable to a fire”.

View this safety video and follow the recommended safety tips for your Christmas tree.

<https://youtu.be/NDq7acN0aEs>

- Choose a tree with fresh, green needles that do not fall off when touched.
- Before placing the tree in the stand, cut two inches from the base of the trunk.
- Make sure the tree is at least three feet away from any heat source, like fireplaces, radiators, candles, heat vents or lights.
- Make sure the tree is not blocking an exit.
- Add water to the tree stand. Be sure to add water daily.
- Use lights that have the label of an independent testing laboratory. Some lights are only for indoor or outdoor use.
- Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Read manufacturer's instructions for number of light strands to connect.
- Never use lit candles to decorate the tree.
- Always turn off Christmas tree lights before leaving home or going to bed.

Dispose of your tree after Christmas. Dried-out trees are a fire danger and should not be left in the home, garage, or placed outside against the home. McKinney citizens can leave their Christmas trees by the curb on their regular scheduled trash pickup day.

By taking simple steps, your chances improves greatly. For additional information, visit www.mckinneyfire.org or www.nfpa.org.

About McKinney

McKinney, Texas, is unique by nature. As one of the fastest growing cities in America, McKinney has a current population of more than 162,000. The city was #1 on the list of Best Places to Live in America in 2014, published by *Money* Magazine. Established in 1848, the city is located 30 miles north of Dallas and is the county seat of Collin County. McKinney offers award-winning schools, a vibrant historic downtown, diverse housing options, a robust economy and a uniquely beautiful natural setting, with rolling hills and lush trees. Visit the city's website at www.mckinneytexas.org.

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