

North Hastings Fire Service ~ Tips

2013

Choosing a Christmas Tree

Always get a tree that is freshly cut. A dried out Christmas tree can be totally consumed by fire in less than 30 seconds. A fresh tree will stay green longer, retain its fragrance and be less of a fire hazard.

Three Freshness Tests

1. **Branch Test** - Draw the end of the branch (15 cm or 6 inches) through the cup of your hand. The needles should slide through your hand without coming off.
2. **Stump Test** - Bang the stump end sharply on the ground. A freshly cut tree should not lose its green needles. Remember that conifers shed some of their needles almost constantly and some of these older yellow needles may still be lodged against the inner branches.
3. **Needle Test** - Fold a needle back until the tip touches the stem making a circle. The needle should not break but should bounce back into shape unless it is frozen.

If you buy your tree several days before you plan to set it up, store the tree outdoors or on a cool porch or patio until you are ready to decorate.

Setting up your Christmas Tree

- Before setting up the tree, saw two inches (5cm) diagonally off the end of the trunk. This will remove the dried end and allow the tree to absorb water.
- Use a tree stand that has widespread legs for better balance and a large water reservoir in which to immerse the tree butt.
- Trees are thirsty. They may drink up to four litres of water per day, so be sure to check daily and supply fresh water as needed. A stand that holds a least four litres of water is recommended.
- If you allow the water level to drop below the bottom of the tree, a seal will form just as it does on a cut flower and a new cut will be necessary.
- Do not set your tree up near a heat source such as a radiator, television, fireplace, or heating duct.

Decorating your Christmas Tree

- Use Canadian Standards Association (CSA) certified lights.
- Inspect lights before use. Check for cracked bulbs and for frayed, broken or exposed wires, and discard if faulty.
- Choose decorations that are flame-retardant, non-combustible and non-conductive.
- Avoid using angel hair (glass wool) together with spray-on snowflakes. This combination is highly combustible.
- Turn off the tree lights when you leave and before you retire at night.

NEVER USE LIGHTED CANDLES ON YOUR CHRISTMAS TREE AND ALWAYS KEEP LIGHTED CANDLES OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN.

Holiday Lights

Use only lights that have been tested for safety. Check each set of lights for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires or loose connections.

Check labels of lights to be used outdoors to see that they are suitable for outdoor use. Never use indoor lights outside. Fasten outdoor lights securely to trees, walls or other firm support to protect them from wind damage. Follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully and do not use more than the recommended number of lights in one circuit.

In case of fire or an emergency, call 9-1-1

HAVE A SAFE & HAPPY CHRISTMAS SEASON!

~ North Hastings Fire Service ~



CANDLES

- Place candles away from absolutely anything that could catch fire.
- Never leave burning candles unattended.
- Burn them only when a responsible adult is overseeing the flame.
- Put candles in sturdy holders on a stable surface, well away from drafts, curtains, children and pets.
- Snuff them out before leaving the room or going to sleep.

THE FIREPLACE

- Don't hang Christmas stockings from the mantel when the fireplace is in use.
- Always use a screen in front of the fireplace to protect against flying sparks.
- Never use gasoline or any other flammable liquids to start a fire.
- Use only seasoned and dried wood.
- Never leave the fire unattended or let it smoulder.
- Clean the ashes regularly. Place the ashes in a metal container and store outside away from flammable materials.

ELECTRICAL OUTLETS

- There is often a tendency to overload wall outlets during the holiday season, use power bars.
- Inspect all cords before using. Make sure they are CSA certified. Look for loose connections or frayed or exposed wire. Discard any defective cords. Read the labels and manufacturer's instructions to ensure proper use.
- Insert plugs fully into outlets. Poor contact may cause overheating or shock.
- To avoid possible overheating, do not coil or bunch an extension cord which is in use and do not run it under carpets or rugs.



THE KITCHEN

Grease fires are a leading cause of home fires in Canada, so be extra careful when doing this kind of cooking. Here's what to do if grease in a pot or pan catches fire:

- Smother the flames by covering the pan with a lid.
- Turn off the heat immediately.
- Use baking soda (flour can be explosive) on shallow grease fires.
- Never turn on the overhead fan, as this could spread the fire.
- Never throw water on a grease fire.

GIFT SUGGESTIONS

- Home smoke alarm
- Carbon monoxide detector
- Multi-purpose (ABC) fire extinguisher
- Candle snuffer
- Thermostatically controlled deep fryer

Last but not least ... make sure your Smoke Alarm WORKS!



For More Information Contact
North Hastings Fire Service

613.332.2442

www.nhfire.ca