

Holiday Safety

Christmas Trees and Lights

As we head into the height of the Holiday Season it is time to take a look at what we will be doing, during this special season. Whatever the decision is, there will be things happening during this time of celebration that will not be seen for another year.

As we begin getting ready for Christmas we must make several big decisions as to what type of tree we are going to have and where we are going to set it. If we are going to purchase an artificial tree that is labeled and identified that it is flame retardant or flame resistive, then it will be simple to go out and get some lights for it.

We all know that these lights must be UL approved. If we decide to purchase a metal or aluminum tree electrical lights cannot be attached to it. However you can use UL approved reflective lights. Done correctly you can have a very beautiful tree.

Should the decision be made to purchase a live tree then a lot more attention to detail must be done. Make sure it is a flame retardant tree, with the trunk cut off 1" to 2" above the bottom and at an angle in order for it to be able to absorb water. If this tree shows signs of drying out remove it from the house immediately. Keep the live trees away from heaters, vents, lanterns and kerosene heaters to avoid potential fires.

Fire Place Safety

Thinking about a fire in the fire place are you? Then wait for a moment. When was the last time your fire place was checked? Has the chimney been serviced by a chimney sweep to get the creosote removed? (***Creosote is the by product from sap. It is best to burn dry wood instead of green wood.***)

If inside chimney surfaces are not cleaned it can catch on fire while burning wood. This type of fire can burn a house down. Should you have a chimney fire, get everyone out of the house and call 9-1-1.

Industry now has a flare that when lit it can put a fire out. Make sure you check all of the screens for the front of the fire place in order to avoid hot embers getting out to where they are not supposed to. This includes the screen on top of the chimney. This screen keeps the flying embers from getting out of the fire place and land on a combustible surface, or forest land and start another fire. Of course the question has to be asked, are you using wood or manufactured (paper) logs. Once a fire is started in the fire place, do not leave until it is out.

Several years ago an apartment dweller in Indiana was burning his artificial logs. On this particular night while it was burning, the oil that is pumped into these logs somehow

started leaking. Had the occupant left his apartment with these logs burning, it would have definitely burned his apartment and perhaps a few more within the building.

These logs are safe but we have to keep in mind that they are man made and is subject to failure. So clean your chimney and enjoy the holiday season. We cannot overly emphasize the use of candles. Candles have caused seven fires in the Fort Sill Community this year. You are reminded that burning candles is prohibited on Fort Sill except for an organized religious service.