



## Kilkenny County Council Fire and Rescue Service Community Fire Safety

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### YOUR CHRISTMAS FIRE SAFETY

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#### Print out this information for future reference.

Special fire safety precautions need to be taken when keeping a live tree in the house. A burning tree can rapidly fill a room with fire and deadly gases.

#### 1. Selecting a Tree for Christmas

Needles on fresh trees should be green and hard to pull back from the branches, and the needle should not break if the tree has been freshly cut. The trunk should be sticky to the touch. Old trees can be identified by bouncing the tree trunk on the ground. If many needles fall off, the tree has been cut too long, has probably dried out, and is a fire hazard.

#### 2. Caring for Your Tree

Do not place your tree close to a heat source, including a fireplace or heat vent. The heat will dry out the tree, causing it to be more easily ignited by heat, flame or sparks. Be careful not to drop or flick cigarette ashes near a tree. Do not put your live tree up too early or leave it up for longer than two weeks. Keep the tree stand filled with water at all times.

#### 3. Disposing of Your Tree

Never put tree branches or needles in a fireplace or wood burning stove. When the tree becomes dry, discard it promptly. The best way to dispose of your tree is by taking it to a community recycling center(s) or having it hauled away by a community pick-up service.

#### 4. Artificial Christmas Trees.

If you are using a metallic or artificial Christmas tree, make sure it is flame retardant.

#### 5. Christmas Tree Lights

Inspect Christmas tree lights each year for frayed wires, bare spots, gaps in the insulation, broken or cracked sockets, and excessive kinking or wear before putting them up. Use only lighting listed by an approved testing laboratory.

#### 6. Do Not Overload Electrical Outlets

Do not link more than two light strands, unless the directions indicate it is safe. Connect strings of lights to an extension cord before plugging the cord into the outlet. Make sure to periodically check the wires - they should not be warm to the touch. **Do Not Leave Lights on Unattended.**

#### 7. Decorations.

Use only non-flammable decorations. All decorations should be non-flammable or flame-retardant and placed away from heat vents. Never leave wrapping paper in a fireplace dispose of it immediately into an external bin.

#### 8. Candle Care

Avoid using lit candles. If you do use them, make sure they are in stable holders and place them where they cannot be easily knocked down. Never leave the house with candles burning.

Never put lit candles on a Christmas tree and do not go near a Christmas tree with an open flame i.e. candles, lighters or matches.

Finally, as in every season, have working and tested smoke alarms installed on every level of your home, test them monthly and keep them clean and equipped with fresh batteries at all times. Know when and how to call for help. And remember to practice your home escape plan.

Please have a safe fire free Christmas and a prosperous New Year.