



READY WISCONSIN RELEASE: Get your home holiday-ready — safety tips from ReadyWisconsin

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MADISON, Wis. — The holidays are a wonderful time to enjoy family and friends. As you get your home ready, follow these tips to help keep you and your family safe.

Whether you have a live or an artificial tree, make sure you take extra safety precautions. Do not place your live tree close to a heat source, such as a fireplace or heat vent. The heat will dry out the tree, causing it to be more easily ignited by heat, flame or sparks. Water your live Christmas tree every day. A dry tree is dangerous because it can catch fire easily.

According to the U.S. Fire Administration, electrical problems cause one out of every four Christmas tree fires. Make sure you inspect holiday lights each year and replace string lights that have worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Follow manufacturer's instructions for number of light strands to connect. Remember some lights are only for indoor or outdoor use, but not both.

It may be tempting, but don't overload electrical outlets. Do not link more than three light strands unless the directions indicate it is safe. Make sure to periodically check the light strands. They should not be warm to touch.

Most home fires caused by candles occur on Christmas Eve, Christmas, and New Year's Day. Instead of lighting real candles, consider using battery-operated flameless candles. Many look realistic and you won't need to worry about forgetting to blow them out or the candle being accidentally knocked over by pets or children.

Turn off all lights on trees and decorations when going to bed or leaving the house. Also unplug extension cords when not in use.

Make sure you have working 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.

For additional holiday safety tips, visit <http://readywisconsin.wi.gov>.

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