



Office of the Chief

Chief John R. Batiste
"Service with Humility"

*****For Immediate Release*****

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Government and Media Relations

State Fire Marshal's Office
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Christmas Tree Safety

Olympia – At Christmas time many families in Washington State enjoy gathering around the tree to celebrate the holiday season and reflect on the past year. As you prepare for the holiday, the Washington State Fire Marshal's Office wants you to know that a small fire involving a Christmas tree can grow very quickly.

When picking, placing, and lighting your Christmas tree, follow these tips to increase fire safety:

- Select a tree that is fresh and has green needles that do not fall off when touched.
- Cut two inches from the base of the tree trunk before placing it in the tree stand.
- Keep all heat sources at least three feet away from the tree. This includes fireplaces, portable heaters, and candles. Heat sources too close to the tree cause more than one in every five of home fires.
- Do not block exits or exit pathways with the tree.
- Add water to the tree stand reservoir daily to keep the tree hydrated.
- Use lights that are listed by a qualified testing laboratory, and select the type appropriate for the location of the tree. Some lights are to be used only in indoor or outdoor settings.
- If using an extension cord for you tree lights, avoid putting cords under rugs and carpets, across doorways, or where they can be damaged or pinched.
- Follow manufactures instructions for all light strands, and replace any with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Almost one third of home Christmas tree fires are caused by electrical problems.
- Never use lit candles with live flames to decorate a tree.
- Always turn off your tree lights before leaving home or going to bed.
- Remove dried-out trees from inside your home, and do not place them in your garage or against your home.

For more information, contact the State Fire Marshal's Office at 360-596-3929.

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The State Fire Marshal's Office is a Bureau of the Washington State Patrol, providing fire and life safety services to the citizens of Washington State. These services include public education, licensing and certification of the fire sprinkler, fireworks, and cigarette industries, data collection and analysis, fire and life safety inspections for state facilities, plan review of school construction projects, all-risk mobilization of statewide fire service resources, hazardous materials training, and training and certification of firefighters.

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