Christmas Tree Fire Safety

A Christmas tree can remain relatively fire resistant if you follow these simple steps:

1. **Recut the trunk** at least one inch above the old cut as soon as you get it home. This allows it to continue to pull moisture into its foliage.

2. **Keep the trunk in water** immediately after it is recut. Moisture is the key to keeping the tree fresh and thereby enhancing its fire resistance. If the tree will be kept outside for a few days, stand it in a bucket of water until you are ready to bring it indoors.

3. **Clean the stand.** Before placing the tree in a sturdy stand (appropriate for the size of tree), rinse the stand with a capful of bleach mixed in water. This reduces the growth of organisms.

4. **Locate the tree away from sources of heat.** Avoid placing the tree near a heater outlet, wood stove or fireplace. Put it in the coolest location possible. Never leave a lighted tree unattended. Caution: be careful not to block a door with the tree or rearranged furniture.

5. **Check the water level in the stand daily.** Never let the water level go below the bottom of the trunk. Commercial floral preservatives can also be added to the water to help keep the tree fresh.

6. **Carefully control lights on the tree.** Miniature holiday lights should be used on trees. Standard-size holiday tree lights generate heat, which accelerate the rate of drying. Do not leave lights turned on for prolonged periods or leave them unattended. Caution: make sure all electrical cords have no frayed or cracked wires or broken sockets before placing them on the tree. Do not attempt to repair a worn light set! Throw it away and purchase a new replacement.

7. **Remove the tree immediately after the holidays.** Even a properly cared for cut tree will eventually die. Take it to a recycle center or leave for your refuse collector.

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