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# CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

## California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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### **CAL FIRE Encourages Holiday Safety! Foster Good Cheer in Safe Hands!**

**Sacramento** – The holiday season is upon us and CAL FIRE wants you and your loved ones to enjoy this time of year. As we come together to celebrate, there are a few ways to ensure your festivities are safe and injury free.

If you are using candles to celebrate the holidays, make sure to place them in an open area and at least three-feet from combustible decorations. Extinguish candles before leaving a room (don't leave them unattended) and make sure to keep them out of the reach of small children and away from pets.

If you are cooking and baking, stay in the kitchen, as it is easy to get distracted with friends and family around. Did you know that unattended cooking is the leading cause of home fires? Keep objects that can catch fire away from cooking surfaces such as pot holders, paper towels, loose clothing, and other flammable items. Try to keep the stovetop, burners, and oven clean. Spilled oil, splattered grease, or food debris can catch fire while the stove or oven is being used or during the oven's self-cleaning cycle. Always check the oven to make sure it's empty before turning it on. Use the oven for cooking only, not for storage. Always have the lid or a fire extinguisher nearby when cooking. If a fire occurs, cover the pan with the lid to smother the fire or use the fire extinguisher. Never attempt to move the pan, and never pour water on an oil/grease fire; it will explode and grow. When in doubt, just get out.

Did you know that a Christmas tree can be one of the most hazardous items in your home? An ignited tree can be totally consumed by a fire in 3 to 5 seconds, and generate over 2,000 degrees of radiant heat. Make sure to fill with water daily, and check lights carefully for broken sockets or frayed wires – replace any damaged strings. Place your tree away from exits, fireplaces, and other heat sources and make sure to remove your tree promptly after the holidays.

Electrical fires run high during the holiday season, try to repair or replace worn, damaged outlets, cords and appliances immediately. Use a surge protector for lights to avoid an overload. Use no more than three sets of lights per single extension cord. Plug the surge protector directly into an outlet, not into an extension cord or another surge protector. Stapling cords to the wall can damage the wire and cause a fire. Avoid running cords across doorways, under carpets, or under furniture. Unplug lights before going to bed or leaving the house. Use outdoor lighting for outdoors and indoor lighting for indoor use.

“This festive season should be a joyous time for family and friends,” said Lynne Tolmachoff, CAL FIRE's Chief of Public Education. “We want you to have a wonderful celebration and following a few simple safety tips can help minimize your chance of an accident.”

For more safety tips on how to protect you and your family, visit [www.fire.ca.gov](http://www.fire.ca.gov).

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