Please celebrate the Holidays safely by following these tips:

- Consider purchasing an artificial tree, they are less flammable and do not require intensive care.
- If you purchase a live tree, pick the freshest tree with green needles, which are springy to the touch.
- Before placing the tree in the stand, cut 1–2” off of the bottom of the trunk so that the tree has a fresh cut to absorb water and immerse the trunk in water as soon as you get it home.
- Purchase a stand which is large enough to hold plenty of water, so that your tree has a constant water supply.
- Fill the tree stand with water, to full capacity every day – I can not stress this enough, as you will see how this affects the tree if ignited in online and ATF videos.
- Plug the tree into an outlet that is not too close to the tree or the tree skirt.
- Make sure the tree is at least 3 feet away from any heat source, including floor vents, fireplace, radiators, candles or lamps.
- Always turn the tree lights off, or better yet unplug, before going to bed or leaving the house. Always.
- Make sure your tree is not blocking an exit.
- Use only UL approved tree lights.
- Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Read manufacturer’s instructions for number of light strands to connect and make sure to note whether lights are for indoor or outdoor use.
- Always make sure you have working smoke detectors and fire sprinkler systems in your home.
- Make sure you heed the advice of our friends at UL and Close Before You Doze® – make sure you close the door of your bedrooms when you sleep, and also close doors behind you if you’re exiting your home during a fire. This helps stop the spread of fire and deadly smoke.
- Discard the tree immediately after the Holidays, even if you think it is not dry. Keeping a dry tree is like inviting a forest fire into your home.
- Remember to test your smoke alarms and tell guests about your home fire escape plan.
- Purchase flameless candles. If you do have flammable candles, keep children and pets away from them. Never leave them unattended. Never have them anywhere near flammable objects.

FACTS:
Nine out of every ten U.S. structure fire deaths happen in homes. Many people are surprised to find out that the very place they feel the safest is where they are at the greatest risk of fire. Home fire sprinklers increase safety, and provide time for escape.

Note that although Christmas tree fires are, thankfully, not common, they are more likely to be serious and deadly.

One of every three home Christmas tree fires are caused by electrical problems.
One in every four fires is caused by a heat source too close to the tree.

Visit Common Voices online at www.FireAdvocates.org