



Short Safety Subject

Short Safety Subjects are provided by the Public Safety Business Center, Fort Bragg, NC. Our intent is to provide safety topics for the purpose of increasing safety awareness and improving safety performance. Additional Short Safety Subjects are available on the PSBC Business Management Web Site at:

www.bragg.army.mil/psbc-bm/PubsAndForms/ShortSafetySubjects.htm

Christmas Decorations



As the holiday season approaches we should all take a minute to think about safety during the Holidays. Every year thousands of people are injured or killed due to faulty Christmas decorations. Careful planning of your holiday decorations can help prevent needless injuries.

Christmas Trees: When buying a natural tree, the most important safety precaution is freshness. The higher the moisture content the less likely it is to dry out and become a fire hazard. Check for freshness by examining the needles. Bend them between your fingers. They shouldn't break. Tap the tree gently on a firm surface, if many needles fall off, the tree is too dry. You can't depend on the color of the tree, many are sprayed green. To keep your tree fresh longer, cut off two inches of the trunk and place it in a sturdy water holding stand with wide spread legs. Place the tree away from fireplaces, kerosene heaters, wall furnaces and other heat sources. Keep watering your tree. You should not block stairs or doorways. Dispose of the tree when needles begin to fall off in large quantities.

Artificial Trees: Artificial trees should bear the UL label. Never use electric lights on metal trees. To avoid electric shock on metal trees, use colored spotlights securely mounted above or below the tree, never fastened directly on it. Plastic trees should be made of fire resistant material. This does not mean that the tree will not burn, but only that it will not catch fire easily. Keep artificial trees away from heat sources. Always turn off your Christmas tree lights whenever you leave your home.

Tree Ornaments and Trimmings: Avoid placing small or breakable ornaments on lower branches where children or pets can reach them and knock them off. Every year many children are treated for cuts from broken ornaments, or from swallowing broken pieces and small parts.

Christmas Lights: Use only UL approved lighting. Inspect electric lights for broken or cracked sockets and frayed wires, replace if necessary. Do not use indoor lights outdoors or visa-versa. Do not overload extension cords, and do not connect more than three sets of lights to one cord. Outlets should be readily accessible for quick disconnection if necessary. Never use lighted candles on or near a tree or other decorations. All lights should be securely fastened to the tree. No bulbs should come in contact with needles or branches. Turn off all holiday lights when you retire or leave home. Outdoor lights should be weatherproof and clearly identified as designed for outdoor use. Remove outdoor lighting as soon as the season is over. Even outside lights are not designed to withstand prolonged exposure to winter weather.

Fireplaces: Fireplaces are very popular during the holidays. Before starting a fire, make sure you remove all decorations from the area and be sure that the flu is open. Do not burn wrappings or evergreen boughs. These can burn extremely fast, throwing off sparks and burning debris. Safely dispose of wrapping paper with your normal trash collection. Residential fires during the holiday season are especially tragic. Celebration and joy can quickly turn to sorrow and anguish because basic fire safety guidelines were neglected. Don't let this happen to you or your family. Be sure to take safety precautions this holiday season. We wish you all a Very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!