

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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HOLIDAY TREE SAFETY TIPS FROM THE VALLEJO FIRE DEPARTMENT

VALLEJO – Chief Donald Parker and the Vallejo Fire Department would like to make everyone's holiday a safe one this year, so here are a few Christmas tree safety tips:

- **Smoke Detectors.** Make sure you have at least one working smoke detector in your home. Twice a year when you change your clocks, change the battery in your detector(s).
- **Clean Your Chimney.** Make it a pre-holiday tradition to have your chimney cleaned so Santa won't get so dirty sliding down it! Many holiday fires occur when the weather gets cooler and we begin to use our fireplaces.
- **Test Tree for Freshness.** This can be done by taking 10 needles from the tree. If two out of 10 snap, the moisture content in the tree is at a level which will allow it to continue to drink water. (This will not work for the Monterey Pine).
- **Wash Debris Off Tree.** When you get home, spray it with water to remove all dead needles and dust.
- **Make a Fresh Cut about ½" off the bottom of the tree.** Trim branches from the bottom of the tree so that there is approximately 8" to 12" clearance from the floor to the lowest branch.
- **Place Tree in a Water Bowl.** The water bowl should hold two to four quarts of water.
- **Fill Bowl to the Rim with Fresh, Clean, Plain Water.** If getting to the water bowl is difficult place ice cubes in the water bowl instead of water. The longer you wait to place your tree in water, the greater the chances are that your tree will lose the required moisture content to keep it fresh during the holiday season.
- **Water your Christmas Tree Daily.** An average tree may consume between a quart and a gallon of water per day. If the water level is allowed to drop below the trunk cut of the tree, a seal will form and prevent the tree from absorbing water.
- **Place your Tree Away from any Heat Source.** Heater, downdraft of heater vents, wood stoves, fireplaces, large appliances such as TVs and direct sunlight cause trees to dry out very fast and once a tree loses its required moisture content it will not look or remain fresh.

- **Do NOT Overload your Tree with Lights.** Use only decorative indoor lights approved by a recognized laboratory. Mini-lights produce minimum heat release. By decorating the tree with a large quantity of lights you add a constant heat source to your tree. Never use outdoor lights on an indoor tree. Never put candles on your tree.
- **Extension Cords.** If you must use an extension cord, use one with a surge protector and do not connect multiple cords together.
- **Teach Children Christmas Tree Safety.** Do not leave matches, lighters, lit cigarettes, candles, or heaters unattended for small hands and inquisitive minds.
- **Do NOT Burn your Christmas Tree in the Fireplace.** Burning your tree in the fireplace may cause a chimney fire or a structure fire.
- **Tree Removal.** Remove your tree as soon as possible after the holiday and dispose of it properly. Never burn your tree or wrapping paper in your fireplace or wood stove. The rapid burning and excessive heat can damage the firebox and chimney, creating a serious fire hazard.
- **Christmas Trees in Businesses.** Any Christmas tree placed in any business, school, church, hospital, senior homes, jails, health clinics, or places of public assembly must be treated with a state fire marshal approved flame retardant chemical and have a tag attached stating this fact. There are several lots in town that provide this service.
- **For those Holiday Meals.** During the holiday season your oven really gets a workout and so many of them are self-cleaning, many people do not read the instructions for using the self-cleaning mode. Please make sure you read the instructions for your oven or consult with the place you bought it. Remember in the clean mode your oven can reach temperature of 1000 degrees F and automatically locks so that it can not be opened until cooled. Any large items in the bottom of the oven can catch fire or being to smoke a lot. Please read your instructions carefully.

The Vallejo Fire Department is once again helping in the "Toys for Tots" Toy Drive. Fire stations are a collection site. Please drop off new and unwrapped toys at any fire station. Please help make a child's Christmas a merry one, and drop off a new toy today. Thank you, and Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from Fire Chief Donald Parker and the Vallejo Fire Department.