







OAK BAY FIRE DEPARTMENT



CHRISTMAS SEASON SAFETY

<i>Christmas Tree Safety</i>	<i>Lights, Candles and other Decorations</i>	<i>General Safety Tips</i>
Before buying a tree, test it for freshness:		
1. Branch Test – Draw the end of the branch (15cm or 6 inches) through the cup of your hand. The needles should slide through your hand without coming off.	Choose decorations that are flame retardant, non-combustible and non-conductive.	There is often a tendency to overload wall outlets during the holiday season. This is unsafe , and should be avoided even for short durations
2. Stump Test – Bang the stump end sharply on the ground. A freshly cut tree should not lose its green needles. Remember that conifers shed some of their needles almost constantly and some of these older yellow needles may still be lodged against inner branches.	If there are young children or pets in your home, avoid very small decorations. (Potential choking hazards). Avoid using angel hair (glass wool) together with spray on snow. This combination is highly combustible.	Insert plugs fully into wall receptacles. Poor contacts may cause overheating or shock hazards. To avoid possible overheating, do not coil or bunch an extension cord which is in use. Do not run any electrical cords under carpets or rugs.
3. Needle Test – Fold a needle back until the tip touches the stem making a circle. The needle should not break but should bounce back into shape (unless frozen). If you buy your tree several days before you plan to set it up, store the tree outdoors or on a cool porch or patio until you are ready to decorate.	Use only CSA certified light strings/sets. Use the proper lights for the environment. Indoor light strings/sets should not be used outdoors as they lack waterproof connections. Some outdoor strings burn too hot indoors.	Be careful in the kitchen! If grease in a pot or pan catches fire: Smother the flames by covering the pan with a lid. Turn off the heat immediately. Let the pan cool down completely before attempting to move it. NEVER throw water on a grease fire.
		
Before setting up the tree, cut 2 inches (5cm) diagonally off the butt.	Do not use metallic ornaments on the tree. If they contact defective wiring they could become a shock hazard.	Never burn gift wrapping, boxes, cartons or other packing material in the fireplace – they burn too rapidly and hot.
Use a tree stand that has widespread legs for better balance and a large water reservoir in which to immerse the butt.	Do not use electric light strings on metallic trees. A faulty system could energize the tree and create a shock hazard.	Don't burn Christmas Trees (branches or needles) in the fireplace or wood stove.
Trees are thirsty! They may drink up to four litres of water per day, so be sure to check daily and supply fresh water as needed. A stand that holds at least four litres of water is recommended.	Place Candles well away from any combustibles. Never leave a burning candle unattended – not even to leave the room for a moment!	Gift Ideas: Smoke alarms – need one on each level. Carbon monoxide detectors. Multi-purpose (ABC) Dry Chemical Fire Extinguisher
If you allow the water level to drop below the bottom of the tree butt, a seal will form, just as it does on a cut flower, and a new cut will be necessary.	Only burn candles when a responsible adult is overseeing the flame.	Practice fire safety in the kitchen. Never leave cooking food unattended
Do not set your tree up near heat sources. It should not block doors or windows.	Always place candles in sturdy non-combustible holders; on sturdy surfaces, away from curtains and drafts.	
Use only CSA certified lights. Test and inspect before use for cracked bulbs, broken, cracked or frayed wires and discard if faulty.	Always snuff out candles before leaving the room or going to sleep.	
Choose flame retardant, non-combustible and non-conductive tree decorations.	We recommend using battery operated candles	
Avoid using Angel Hair (glass wool). Together with spray on snow – the combination is highly combustible.		
Turn off tree lights when you leave home or before retiring at night.	TEST YOUR SMOKE ALARMS!!	PRACTICE YOUR HOME FIRE ESCAPE PLAN
NEVER USE lighted candles on Christmas Trees!		
Remove your tree within 10-14 days. After that time in a heated building even the freshest tree will dry out.		

HAVE A FIRE SAFE CHRISTMAS – 250-592-9121