



SAN FRANCISCO FIRE DEPARTMENT  
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHRISTMAS FIRE SAFETY

The San Francisco Fire Department suggests the following recommendations to insure that your family has a safe holiday:

Unless your building is protected by an approved automatic sprinkler system, natural-cut trees are prohibited in public assemblies, schools, institutions, retail stores, and public areas of residential buildings. For more detailed descriptions of these group occupancies, please call the Bureau of Fire Prevention at (415) 558-3300. Natural-cut trees are allowed within dwelling units in apartment buildings and condos that do not have sprinkler systems.

Natural-cut trees in schools, public assemblies, and common areas of residential buildings shall be fire-retardant treated by a California State Fire Marshal registered applicator. Such trees shall be provided with appropriate tags.

When using natural cut trees, saw off at least 1/2 inch of the trunk above the original cut and mount the tree in a support device that holds water. The device shall be stable, hold the tree securely, and be of adequate size to avoid tipping over of the tree. The device shall be capable of containing a minimum two-day supply of water.

The water level, when full, shall cover the tree stem at least two (2) inches. The water level shall be maintained above the fresh cut and checked at least once daily.

Select the location for your tree carefully. Keep the tree away from fireplaces, heating vents, wall furnaces, and other heat producing appliances which may dry out the tree.

The tree shall be removed from the dwelling or building whenever the needles or leaves fall off readily when a tree branch is shaken or if the needles are brittle and break when bent between the thumb and index finger. The tree shall be checked daily for dryness.

Please do not use candles or other flaming devices on your tree or near other holiday decorations.

Examine the tree lights for the Underwriters Laboratories label and check the cord for signs of wear and tear. Discard if old or frayed.

Extension cords must be used with care. It is recommended that no more than 3 sets of lights be used per extension cord. Do not place the cords under rugs or in paths of travel.

When the holiday is over, and the tree is taken down, do not attempt to burn the tree in your fireplace, backyard, or front yard. Dry trees throw off tremendous amounts of heat and fire. Leave the tree in front of your house for your scavenger company on the day of your regular garbage pick-up.

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