



Christmas Tree Safety

It is not recommended that cut Christmas trees be used in an office space or common area. They present a potential fire hazard. In the event that you decide to use one, a list of safety guidelines is presented below:

- Treat all indoor cut trees with a flame retardant chemical approved by the State Fire Marshal.
- Choose a sturdy water-filled non-tip stand.
- Try to position the tree near an outlet so that cords are not running long distances. Don't overload electrical outlets or run extension cords under carpets, rugs, across doorways, or near heaters. Be sure extension cords aren't pinched behind or under furniture. The cord may become damaged and spark a slow smoldering fire.
- Place the tree out of the way of traffic and do not block doorways or hallways.
- Keep trees at least 1 meter away from any source of heat. Needles tend to dry quicker in warmer rooms, so make sure to keep a good supply of water in the stand.
- Secure the tree to keep it from overturning.
- If the tree is being used outdoors, never run outdoor extension cords across lawns, driveways, or traffic areas. Power for all outdoor lighting should be supplied by permanent weatherproof wiring installed by a professional electrician.
- Artificial trees are less flammable than live trees. If purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label "Fire Resistant." Although this label does not mean the tree won't catch fire, it does indicate the tree will resist burning and should extinguish quickly.
- Safely dispose of the live tree when it begins dropping needles. Dried-out trees are highly flammable and should not be left in offices, or placed against a wall outside.
- Do not use cellophane, cotton batting or paper decorations unless they have been treated with retardant.
- Check live cut tree water levels daily.
- Always check for freshness when purchasing a live tree. A fresh tree will be green, the needles will be hard to pull from the branches, and needles should not break when placed between your fingers. The base of a tree should be sticky with resin and the needles should not come off when bounced or shook.
- Keep a fire extinguisher close by the Christmas tree.
- Use an approved (fiberglass) step stool or stepladder when decorating the higher limbs and make sure it is in good condition.

LIGHTS

- If using lights to decorate the tree make sure they are listed by a [nationally recognized testing laboratory](#) (i.e. UL, FM, etc.). Some lights are designed only for indoor or outdoor use, not both. Larger tree lights should also have some type of reflector rather than a bare bulb.
- Do not use candles, lamps, lighters or electrical appliances near trees.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions on how to use tree lights. Throw away any set whose lights are cracked, whose cord is frayed, or whose sockets are loose or damaged.
- Never use electric lights on a metal/metallic tree. The tree can become charged with electricity from faulty lights, and a person touching a branch could be electrocuted.
- Always unplug Christmas tree lights before leaving.

This Alliant Risk Control Consulting fact sheet is not intended to be exhaustive. The discussion and best practices suggested herein should not be regarded as legal advice. Readers should pursue legal counsel or contact their insurance providers to gain more exhaustive advice.