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## **Don't let your holiday plans go up in smoke** **Holiday fire safety tips from CYFS**

Newmarket, ON, December 12, 2016 – [Central York Fire Services \(CYFS\)](#) reminds residents to take a proactive approach on fire safety this holiday season. Festive lights, decorations, candles and Christmas trees are classic hallmarks of the season, so it is important to be aware of the potential they pose as fire hazards and how you can prevent a disaster. By keeping the following tips in mind, a safe and happy holiday can be enjoyed by all.

### **Holiday Fire Safety Tips**

#### **Christmas trees should be:**

- As fresh as possible (needles should be green and not falling off the tree).
- Watered often – the base of the tree trunk should be immersed in water at all times.
- Real or artificial, Christmas trees must be placed away from heat sources such as fireplaces, radiators and heaters.
- Kept away from all lit candles. Battery operated, flameless LED candles are safer.

#### **When using lights, candles and decorations, remember to:**

- Check for broken bulbs and frayed wires before stringing lights on the tree. Discard any sets that are damaged or old.
- Unplug lights before going to bed and limit the amount of electrical cords you have plugged into power strips and multi-outlet converters.
- Opt for battery operated LED candles over regular candles whenever possible.
- If you must use regular candles, secure them in a sturdy holder away from children, pets and combustible materials. Blow all candles out before leaving the room.
- Keep matches or lighters used for candles away from children. It is important to teach children that these items are not toys.

#### **When cooking over the holiday season:**

- Stay in the kitchen. Unattended cooking is the leading cause of kitchen fires.
- If a pot catches fire, turn off the heat, and carefully slide a tight-fitting lid over the pot to smother the flames.
- Carefully watch anyone attempting to cook while under the influence of alcohol. Alcohol and fire is a dangerous mix.

#### **When operating a fireplace, wood burning stove or space heater:**

- Try to avoid placing decorations or upholstered items close to fireplaces, wood burning stoves or space heaters. Due to the high amount of heat generated by these appliances, decorations can easily catch fire if left unattended.
- Make sure the chimney connected to your fireplace or wood burning stove is clean and free of debris. Blocked chimney flues are known to trigger fires and emit deadly carbon monoxide gas.

#### **Other fire safety tips:**

- Test your [smoke](#) and [carbon monoxide alarms](#) and make sure their batteries are well-charged. Working alarms save lives.
- Have an [emergency plan](#) ready and ensure your family and any visiting guests know where to exit and meet upon evacuation.
- Prepare an [emergency kit](#) full of essentials such as flashlights, first aid materials, thermal blankets, water bottles, etc. Ensure there is a surplus of items in your emergency kit to account for guests.

For more holiday safety tips, please visit [www.cyfs.ca](http://www.cyfs.ca)

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#### **For more information, please contact:**

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