



For immediate release

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## **Snohomish County Fire District 7 Aims to Put a Freeze on Winter Fires**

Clearview, Wash. – Decorating homes and businesses is a long-standing tradition around the holiday season. Unfortunately, these same decorations may increase your chances of fire. Following a few simple fire safety tips can keep electric lights, candles, and the ever popular Christmas tree from creating a tragedy.

### **Christmas Trees**

#### **Selecting a Tree for the Holidays**

Needles on fresh trees should be green and hard to pull back from the branches, and the needles should not break if the tree has been freshly cut. The trunk should be sticky to the touch. Old trees can be identified by bouncing the tree trunk on the ground. If many needles fall off, the tree has been cut too long and, has probably dried out, and is a fire hazard.

#### **Caring for Your Tree**

Do not place your tree close to a heat source, including a fireplace or heat vent. The heat will dry out the tree, causing it to be more easily ignited by heat, flame or sparks. Be careful not to drop or flick cigarette ashes near a tree. Do not put your live tree up too early or leave it up for longer than two weeks. Keep the tree stand filled with water at all times.

#### **Disposing of Your Tree**

Never put tree branches or needles in a fireplace or wood-burning stove. When the tree becomes dry, discard it promptly. The best way to dispose of your tree is by taking it to a recycling center or having it hauled away by a community pick-up service.

### **Holiday Lights**

#### **Maintain Your Holiday Lights**

Inspect holiday lights each year for frayed wires, bare spots, gaps in the insulation, broken or cracked sockets, and excessive kinking or wear before putting them up. Use only lighting listed by an approved testing laboratory.

#### **Do Not Overload Electrical Outlets**

Do not link more than three light strands, unless the directions indicate it is safe. Make sure to periodically check the wires – they should not be warm to the touch.

#### **Do not leave holiday lights on unattended!**

## **Holiday Decorations**

### **Use Only Nonflammable Decorations**

All decorations should be nonflammable or flame-retardant and placed away from heat vents. If you are using a metallic or artificial tree, make sure it is flame retardant.

### **Don't Block Exits**

Ensure that trees and other holiday decorations do not block an exit way. In the event of a fire, time is of the essence. A blocked entry/exit way puts you and your family at risk.

### **Never Put Wrapping Paper in the Fireplace**

Wrapping paper in the fireplace can result in a very large fire, throwing off dangerous sparks and embers that may result in a chimney fire.

## **Candle Care**

### **Avoid Using Lit Candles**

If you do use lit candles, make sure they are in stable holders and place them where they cannot be easily knocked down. Never leave the house with candles burning.

### **Never Put Lit Candles on a Tree**

Do not go near a Christmas tree with an open flame – candles, lighters or matches.

As in every season, maintain smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home. Know when and how to call for help. And remember to practice your home escape plan!