

Trees

- When purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label "Fire Resistant."
- When purchasing a live tree, check for freshness. A fresh tree is green, needles are hard to pull from branches and when bent between your fingers, needles do not break. The trunk butt of a fresh tree is sticky with resin, and when tapped on the ground, the tree should not lose many needles.
- When setting up a tree at home, place it away from fireplaces, radiators or portable heaters. Place the tree out of the way of traffic and do not block doorways.
- Cut a few inches off the trunk of your tree to expose the fresh wood. This allows for better water absorption and will help to keep your tree from drying out and becoming a fire hazard.
- Be sure to keep the stand filled with water, because heated rooms can dry live trees out rapidly.

Lights

- Check all tree lights—even if you've just purchased them—before hanging them on your tree. Make sure all the bulbs work and that there are no frayed wires, broken sockets or loose connections.
- Never use electric lights on a metallic tree. The tree can become charged with electricity from faulty lights, and a person touching a branch could be electrocuted.
- Before using lights outdoors, check labels to be sure they have been certified for outdoor use. To hold lights in place, string them through hooks or insulated staples, not nails or tacks. Never pull or tug lights to remove them.
- Plug all outdoor electric decorations into circuits with ground fault circuit interrupters to avoid potential shocks.
- Turn off all lights when you go to bed or leave the house. The lights could short out and start a fire.

Decorations

- Use only non-combustible or flame-resistant materials to trim a tree. Choose tinsel or artificial icicles of plastic or nonleaded metals.
- Never use lighted candles on a tree or near other evergreens. Always use non-flammable holders, and place candles where they will not be knocked down.
- In homes with small children, take special care to avoid decorations that are sharp or breakable. Keep trimmings with small removable parts out of the reach of children to prevent them from swallowing or inhaling small pieces. Avoid trimmings that resemble candy or food that may tempt a young child to eat them.
- Wear gloves to avoid eye and skin irritation while decorating with spun glass "angel hair." Follow container directions carefully to avoid lung irritation while decorating with artificial snow sprays.

- Remove all wrapping papers, bags, paper, ribbons and bows from tree and fireplace areas after gifts are opened. These items can pose suffocation and choking hazards to a small child or can cause a fire if near flame.

Fireplaces

- Before lighting any fire, remove all greens, boughs, papers, and other decorations from fireplace area. Check to see that the flue is open.
- Use care with "fire salts," which produce colored flames when thrown on wood fires. They contain heavy metals that can cause intense gastrointestinal irritation and vomiting if eaten. Keep them away from children.
- Do not burn wrapping papers in the fireplace. A flash fire may result as wrappings ignite suddenly and burn intensely

Woodstove Safety Tips

Woodstoves are a popular alternative heating source for many manufactured homeowners, especially those who own older model homes. Make sure to take proper precautions to ensure that you enjoy the added comfort while minimizing the risk to your family and home.

- Open the dampers before starting a fire in a wood stove
- Vent your stove properly and insulate vent from flammable materials

- Use paper and kindling wood to ignite a fire. Avoid using lighter fluid, kerosene, or gasoline
- Keep dry wood away from the stove
- Remember that slow burning fires can create creosote and soot problems Small hot fires are more efficient

Scheduled Maintenance:

Weekly: We recommend cleaning the ashes from your stove every week during the heating season. Dispose of ashes in a metal container with a lid and store away from your home and combustibles.

Monthly: Inspect your pipes and connections monthly for creosote and soot build-up.

Warning signs of chimney problems:

- Build up of creosote (dripping from the base of the chimney or staining of the outer chimney shell)
- Sluggish draft (smoke spilling out when the woodstove door is opened)
- Corrosion of the outer shell of a factory built chimney
- Deterioration of the brickwork of a masonry chimney