

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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KEEP TREES WELL-WATERED TO AVOID FIRE THIS CHRISTMAS

JACKSON, Miss. – As Mississippians decorate for Christmas this week, many will buy live trees that need to be watered daily to prevent them drying out and catching fire.

There have been 61 fire deaths in Mississippi so far in 2020. That's compared to 57 at this time last year.

To prevent more fire deaths, the State Fire Marshal's Office recommends the following fire safety measures.

- Use holiday decorations made with flame-retardant or non-combustible materials.
- Carefully inspect new and previously used light strings and replace damaged items before plugging lights in.
- Use lights approved by Underwriter's Laboratories.
- Do not overload extension cords.
- Keep children and pets away from light strings and electrical decorations.
- Turn off all light strings and decorations before leaving home or going to bed.
- Never use lit candles to decorate a tree, and make sure any lit candles in the room are placed away from tree branches.
- Make sure the tree is not blocking an exit.
- Cut at least one inch off the bottom of the tree trunk before placing it in a stand.
- Live trees can "drink" one gallon of water of water daily.
- Check water at least twice daily.
- Make sure the tree is at least six feet away from any heat source.
- Take the tree down when it becomes dry.
- Recycle it, use it as a fish shelter in a farm pond or put it out with the trash.
- Do not burn a tree in the fireplace. Heat may explode the wood and set the room on fire.
- Check with your tree provider to see if they will apply a Fire-Retardant for you.

You may also consider making a "Fire-Retardant" solution. The United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service recommends placing your tree in a solution after it is cut. Fill the tree stand with the following mixture.

- 2 gallons hot water
- 2 cups corn syrup
- 2 ounces liquid bleach
- 2 pinches Epsom salt
- ½ cup borax
- 1 tsp chelated iron (available at garden shops)

Video of a controlled Christmas tree fire conducted at the Mississippi Fire Academy in 2019 may be viewed and downloaded here: <https://youtu.be/TmmCGOkGwI>

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