

WARREN COUNTY NEW YORK

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A surge in interest in live Christmas trees for the holiday season has fire safety experts concerned about the household danger they could present.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has caused some to look for new hobbies and family activities, and that has resulted in increased interest in live Christmas trees. The National Christmas Tree Association expects sales to increase up to 20 percent this year.

Warren County Fire Coordinator Brian LaFlure said those who are bringing live Christmas trees into their home need to know how to properly care for them to avoid them becoming a fire hazard. They are particularly dangerous if becoming too dry.

“Christmas trees burn fast and hot when they ignite, and can quickly cause a major fire in a home if not properly maintained,” LaFlure said.

Ann Marie Mason, Warren County Director of the Office of Emergency Services, added, “When decorating your homes this holiday season, be fire smart. Please follow these guidelines regarding the care and decorating of your tree and other fire safety tips, to help ensure that you have a **happy and safe holiday!**”

Some basic tips:

- **ALWAYS** keep the tree stand secure and filled with water.
- **NEEDLES** on fresh trees should be green and hard to pull off branches.
- **DO NOT** place the tree close to a heat source, including a fireplace or heat vent.
- **DO NOT** put your live tree up too early or leave it up for too long.
- **DO NOT** dispose of branches or needles in a fireplace or woodstove.
- **CHECK** light strings to make sure none are frayed or damaged.
- **MAKE SURE** smoke detectors are in working order, with fresh batteries.

Properly caring for a live tree is one of a number of home fire- and safety-related concerns for the holiday season, according to Mason, LaFlure and NY State Office of Fire Prevention & Control. Some others to consider:

- Candles offer nice ambience, but are a danger if not used properly. Ensure that they are fully extinguished and away from materials that they can set ablaze.
- Fireplaces and woodstoves are popular around the holidays, but chimneys should be cleaned annually before use. Only burn dry hardwood.
- Carbon monoxide detectors should be in place and checked before using any fire source in a building.

Additional New York Office of Fire Prevention & Control holiday safety tips [can be found here.](#)