



DIOCESE OF TUCSON RISK MANAGEMENT ADVISORY

November 2008

CHRISTMAS TIME SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

The Diocese of Tucson recommends the following ideas to help make the season safe. Special decorations and festive gatherings are often part of Christmas celebrations and require attention if losses are to be prevented.

- A. Christmas trees (real and artificial) and decorations placed in public areas (churches, halls, etc.) must be treated so that they are flame retardant or they must be made of a non-flammable material. CHECK WITH YOUR LOCAL FIRE STATION FOR SPECIFIC REGULATIONS.

"REAL CHRISTMAS TREES CAN PRESENT A SEVERE FIRE HAZARD, ESPECIALLY AS THEY DRY OUT. EVEN POTTED TREES CAN BECOME DANGEROUSLY DRY. Purchase the freshest tree possible and follow local fire station regulations and recommendations for trees and decorations in public and non-public areas (including those recommendations with reference to keeping the trunks of "real" trees in water). Always place trees and decorations away from sources of heat.

Once it is time to take the tree down, do so, and dispose of the tree immediately. DO NOT LEAVE A DRY TREE INSIDE OR NEXT TO A STRUCTURE WHERE IT COULD BECOME FUEL FOR A FIRE. DO NOT ATTEMPT TO BURN THE TREE IN A FIREPLACE, STOVE OR EVEN IN THE OPEN.

- B. Christmas trees and decorations must be located so that they do not obstruct (and will not obstruct in case of falling) exits, exit signs, exit lights, fire alarms, fire sprinklers, fire extinguishers, etc.
- C. All Christmas lights must be examined prior to use. Discard and replace light strings that are frayed, broken, etc. **DO NOT REPAIR LIGHT STRINGS.** All light strings must bear an Underwriters Laboratory "UL" listed seal. Lighting that is used outdoors must be specifically rated for such duty. Unplug lights when you are away.

CHECK WITH YOUR LOCAL FIRE STATION FOR REGULATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE SAFE USE OF CHRISTMAS LIGHTS.

- D. The use of candles in conjunction with decorations and celebrations must be tightly controlled. **DO NOT USE CANDLES ON CHRISTMAS TREES.** Candleholders must be noncombustible. Candles should be placed well away from combustible materials and checked frequently. GENERALLY, HAND HELD CANDLES SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED.
- E. Make sure that parking lots, building approaches, and interior walking surfaces are well lighted and free of obstructions, holes, etc.