



Office of Commissioner of Insurance and Safety Fire

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JOHN F. KING
*Commissioner of Insurance
and Safety Fire*

Two Martin Luther King Jr. Drive
West Tower, Suite 702
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Weston Burleson, 404-232-1388

Twitter: @GA_DOI

Facebook: @GeorgiaDOI

Instagram: @GeorgiaDOI

COMMISSIONER KING ASKS GEORGIANS TO BE CAREFUL WITH HOLIDAY DECORATIONS

ATLANTA – Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner John F. King recognizes that Christmas trees and other holiday decorations present unique fire safety hazards and is calling on all Georgians to exercise caution while decorating this holiday season.

“Holiday decorating is fun for the whole family, but decorations gone wrong can present a holiday hassle,” said Commissioner King. “The more lights or decorations you have can increase the chance of an accidental fire.”

[Data from the National Fire Prevention Association](#) shows that U.S. fire departments responded to 160 home fires that started with Christmas trees between 2013 and 2017. Around 44 percent of Christmas tree fires were due to lighting equipment while 25 percent could be traced to a heat source that had gotten too close to the tree. During that same time, U.S. fire departments responded to around 780 home structure fires per year that began with other Christmas decorations.

In recognition of these risks, Commissioner King presents these common-sense tips for keeping your home and your decorations safe this holiday season.

- Make sure that your tree has fresh, green needles that do not fall off when they are touched.
- Keep your tree at least three feet from any heat source, including fireplaces, radiators, candles, or heat vents.
- Check your Christmas lights boxes to see if they have the label of a recognized testing laboratory and to verify whether they are indoor or outdoor lights.
- Do not use lit candles to decorate your tree.
- Turn off all decorations when you go to bed and when you leave the house.
- Follow the directions of light packaging to see how many strings can be safely linked together.
- Inspect all lights and decorations for cracks, damaged sockets, and loose or bare wires. Unplug all electrical lights and devices before conducting any major or minor repair.
- Secure lights, decorations, and cords to prevent wind damage and ensure that wiring and insulation are not damaged.

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The mission of the Office of the Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner is to protect Georgia families by providing access to vital insurance products and safe buildings through fair regulation that creates economic opportunities for all Georgians.