



**Office of Commissioner of
Insurance and Safety Fire**
Protect | Enforce | Educate | Inform

JOHN F. KING
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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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COMMISSIONER KING: BE CAUTIOUS WITH HOLIDAY DECOR

ATLANTA – Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner John F. King urges Georgians to exercise caution while decorating this holiday season. If not handled appropriately, Christmas trees and other holiday decorations can become fire safety hazards.

[Data from the National Fire Prevention Association](#) shows that between 2015 and 2019, U.S. fire departments responded to an average of 160 home fires that started with Christmas trees every year. Almost half of those fires were due to lighting equipment.

U.S. fire departments also responded to an average of 790 home fires that began with Christmas decorations other than trees. These fires caused an annual average of one death, 26 fire-related injuries, and \$13 million in property damage.

In recognition of these risks, Commissioner King asks Georgians to follow the following tips for keeping your home and your decorations safe this holiday season.

- Ensure that your tree has fresh, green needles that do not fall off when they are touched. Dry trees can become completely engulfed in flames in less than one minute.
- Keep your tree at least three feet from any heat source, including fireplaces, radiators, candles, or heat vents. One in five trees fires could be traced to a heat source that was too close to the tree.
- 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.
- Turn off all decorations when you go to bed and when you leave the house.
- 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.

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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.