

December 13, 2011

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If you enjoy a live Christmas tree, pick a robust one, and keep it hardy throughout the holiday season. And, when it's time to recycle that live evergreen, the City's public works department is at your service.

If you haven't purchased a live tree yet, choose a tree with fresh green needles that are hard to pull back from the branches. If you opt for an artificial tree, check the label to make sure the tree is flame retardant.

Cut 1 to 2 inches from the base of the trunk of a real tree before putting it in the tree stand. The trunk of your fresh tree should be sticky to the touch. Bounce the tree trunk on the ground. If several needles fall off, the tree has been cut too long and may have dried out, making it a fire hazard before you even get it home.

Once the tree is decorated, keep it away from any heat source or candles. Replace strings of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Don't connect more than three strands of mini string sets and a maximum of 50 bulbs for screw-in bulbs. Never use lit candles to decorate the tree. Always turn off Christmas tree lights before leaving home or going to bed.

Unfortunately, Christmas trees account for 250 fires annually, resulting in 14 deaths, 26 injuries and more than \$13.8 million in property damage. Typically shorts in electrical lights or open flames from candles, lighters or matches start tree fires. Well-watered live trees are not a problem so keep the tree stand filled with water at all times.

Dried-out trees should not be left in the home or garage, or placed outside against the home. If you live inside the city limits of Burleson, it's easy to recycle your Christmas tree when it begins dropping needles. The City's compost/mulch/recycling center is open 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Tuesday, Friday and Saturday. The center will be open Tuesday, Dec. 27; Friday, Dec. 30; and Saturday, Dec. 31. The compost/mulch/recycling center is located at 620 Memorial Plaza, behind Fire Station #2.

If you don't want to go the compost/mulch/recycling center, set the Christmas tree at the curb along with bulk trash, brush, limbs and yard waste during your zone collection week. The tree needs to be at the curb no later than 7 a.m. on the Monday of your zone collection week. To verify which zone your home is in, go to the City website, www.burlesontx.com, Departments, Public Works, Solid Waste, Special Trash Pickup, and click on Specials by Zone for a map of the zones. You may also call the Municipal Service Center at 817-426-9830.