

## **Safe End to the Holiday Season**

For many folks, it's hard to let go of the holiday spirit, and taking down the Christmas tree isn't nearly as much fun as putting it up. But the longer a tree stays up, the greater a fire hazard it becomes. It's best to discard trees within one month after purchase. The best way to dispose of your tree is to take it to a tree recycling center or have it hauled away by a community pick-up service. If you live in the country or town where there is no tree recycling or pick-up program, contact local authorities for a recommended means of disposal.

Never burn Christmas trees (branches or needles) in a fireplace or wood stove. Firs and pines have lots of sap, which can explode. The needles burn like tinder, quickly and fiercely. Flames can flare up out of control and send sparks flying across a room. They can also ignite creosote deposits in the chimney and cause a fire in the chimney.

After gifts are opened, quickly discard the wrapping paper and packaging in a safe manner. Wrapping paper is very flammable. Never burn gift wrapping in the fireplace or wood stove. It can ignite suddenly and cause a flash fire. Some gift wrapping contains material that can throw off dangerous sparks and/or cause a dangerous chemical buildup in the air of your house. Gift wrapping burns very hot, causing large flames, which can ignite creosote deposits in the chimney and cause a fire in the chimney.

Remove outdoor lights as soon as the season is over; they are not designed for prolonged exposure to the elements, especially in winter weather. Careful handling of lights when you are taking them down and repacking them will reduce the chances of damaging a good set of lights.