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News Release

Arkansas City Fire-EMS Department offers holiday safety tips

Home Christmas decorations and trees can be leading causes of fire risk

ARKANSAS CITY, Kan. (December 5, 2017) — As people put up holiday decorations this Christmas season, the Arkansas City Fire-EMS Department offers some holiday safety tips for Ark City residents.

With more than 35 years in fire service, Fire Chief Bobby Wolfe has seen many holiday seasons through the years and knows the sadness that can result from a holiday fire.

"I have seen holidays ruined over a fire that started from home decorations, including Christmas lights," Wolfe said.

"People can get caught up in the hustle and bustle of the season. It is easy to forget about fire safety. The most important thing is to pay attention. Turn the lights off when you go to bed or leave the house."

Wolfe would like to remind citizens of the following fire safety tips this holiday season:

- Keep candles away from decorations and other combustible materials. Do not use candles to decorate Christmas trees. Extinguish all candles when leaving the room or going to sleep.
- Make sure not to overload extension cords.
- Don't use lights with insulation missing on the cords. Frayed wires, broken sockets or loose connections all can lead to fire risk.
- Keep children and pets away from light strings and electrical decorations.
- Before using lights outside, check the labels to be sure they have been certified for outdoor use.
- Whenever possible, choose decorations made with flame-resistant, flame-retardant and non-combustible materials.
- Try to keep live trees as moist as possible by giving them plenty of water daily.
- Make sure the tree is at least 3 feet away from any heat source and also away from heat vents, which can dry out live trees.
- Do not place the tree where it might block exits.

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- Safely dispose of the tree when it begins dropping needles. Dried-out trees are highly flammable and should not be left in a house or garage, or placed against the house.

Citizens with questions about fire safety during the holiday season or questions about a particular decoration should call the Arkansas City Fire-EMS Department at (620) 441-4430.

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