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***Editor's Note:** All media are invited to attend. Cameras can be set up thirty minutes prior to the burn and experts will be available for interviews. Please text Stacey if you plan to attend.*

PHOTO/VIDEO OPPORTUNITY

Live Fire Safety Demonstration -- Nov. 25 Expert advice to keep your family and property safe this holiday season

Hamilton, N.J. – Twinkling lights; check. Turkey; check. Christmas tree; check. House fire; NOT on the agenda. The holiday season is filled with festivities, but everything that encompasses the holidays, including the real Christmas tree, decorations, lights, and candles, and even cooking the turkey and sides all have the potential to spark a dangerous fire.

Keeping families and their homes safe this holiday season is the goal of the live Christmas Tree Burn Trailer Fire Sprinkler Demonstration and Dangers of Frying a Frozen Turkey Demonstration on Monday, Nov. 25, 11 -11:30 a.m. at the Monmouth County Fire Academy in Freehold, N.J. The demonstration, which is free and open to the public, is co-sponsored by the [New Jersey Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board \(NJFSAB\)](#), [Sprinkler Fitters Local 696](#), the [New Jersey Fire Safety Commission](#), and the [New Jersey Division of Fire Safety](#).

“The fire safety demonstrations will give fire prevention and life-saving tips and show in real-time how quickly a dry Christmas tree catch fire and spread, how effective a fire sprinkler system can control the blaze; and illustrate the extreme danger of frying a frozen turkey in hot oil,” said David Kurasz, Executive Director of the New Jersey Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board (NJFSAB).

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) reports that [Christmas tree fires](#), while not very common, are particularly dangerous when they do occur. Here are some key statistics:

- Between 2014 and 2018, an average of 160 home fires per year originated from Christmas trees, resulting in two deaths, 14 injuries, and \$10 million in property damage annually.
- Almost half (45%) of these fires were caused by electrical distribution or lighting equipment, and 22% were due to heat sources being too close to the tree. Intentional fires made up 15% of the total.
- About three-quarters of Christmas tree fires occurred in December and one-third in January, emphasizing the importance of promptly disposing of dried out trees after the holidays.
- Over 40% of these fires started in the living room, which is often where trees are displayed.



The Christmas Tree Burn Demonstration features a trailer with two rooms with a dry Christmas tree, holiday decorations, furniture and smoke alarms. The difference is one room has a fire sprinkler system, and the other does not. A fire is lit in both rooms to show how quickly dry trees can ignite and how fast fire can spread. The room without sprinklers to show how fast Christmas tree fires can travel to the rest of the room and pose danger to loved ones and destroy property. The room equipped with fire sprinklers demonstrates how quickly and efficiently sprinklers control the fire, giving families extra time to escape and reducing potential fire damage. Then, firefighters will demonstrate how dangerous it can be to drop a frozen turkey in hot oil which can result in fiery explosion that can cause severe burns and injuries and spark outdoor fires.

“Keep the holidays bright by practicing fire safety – inspect your lights, water your tree, and never leave candles unattended. A little caution keeps the season joyful and your loved ones safe,” said Richard Mikutsky the Director and State Fire Marshal of the N.J. Division of Fire Safety.

John Wisniewski, a former NJ State Assembly member, past Chair and a current Member of the New Jersey Fire Safety Commission noted, “The holiday season is meant to be a happy time. Knowledge is power, and learning about how fires can start in your home and taking simple steps to prevent them can go a long way towards ensuring the safety and protection of your loved ones.”

Every year there are preventable house fires during the holidays from dry Christmas trees, damaged electrical decorations, live candles, and hazardous cooking. Step one is to test your smoke alarms and make sure they are working, and then follow these tips for indoors and outdoors which is even more important during this time of drought and high wildfire risk.

Decorations Indoors & Outdoors

- Inspect all lights, decorations and cords BEFORE decorating and dispose of those with frayed or pinched wires, or loose bulb connections.
- Avoid overloading electrical outlets and make sure to use properly rated indoor and outdoor extension cords. Too many lights plugged into one outlet can cause overheating and may spark increasing fire risk.
- Consider energy efficient LED lights that generate less heat than traditional bulbs.
- Use flame resistant decorations especially for outdoor use - those made of materials like metal, glass, or flame-retardant plastic are safer than those with highly flammable materials.
- Keep decorations clear of all combustible materials and a safe distance away from dry vegetation and leaves outdoors. Keep water source or bucket nearby in case of fire.

Christmas Trees

- Choose a tree with fresh green needles that do not fall off when touched. If the needles do, then the tree is dry, and they are highly flammable.
- Make sure that your Christmas tree and decorations are at least 3 feet away from any heat source like fireplaces, candles, or space heaters.



- Never decorate your tree with live candles.
- Turn off Christmas tree lights before going to bed or leaving your home.
- Everyday water your Christmas tree to keep your tree from drying out. When it becomes dry or after the holidays, dispose of your tree.

Candles

- Keep candles at least 12 inches away from any object, especially curtains and other flammable items, and make sure they are in stable holders.
- Do not leave lit candles, matches, or lighters unattended and keep them out of reach of children and pets.
- Use battery-operated flameless candles.

Cooking

- Do not leave food on the stove or in the oven unattended while cooking.
- Make sure kids stay away from hot food and liquids.
- Don't leave flammable items (recipes, paper towels, dish towels) near the stove.
- Only use a [turkey fryer](#) outdoors, keep it a safe distance from buildings or flammable objects, and never leave it unattended.
- Completely thaw your frozen turkey in the refrigerator -- water and oil do not mix, so water causes oil to spill over and cause a fire when a turkey is placed in oil when still frozen.

According to the NFPA, fire sprinklers can reduce the risk of dying in a fire by 80 percent and reduce property loss by 70 percent. Fire sprinkler systems prove their high reliability with a 92 percent correct operation rate, and effectiveness in controlling fires 96 percent of the time.

“Fire safety is not just important around the holidays, it is important all year round,” said Kurasz. “Having a fire sprinkler system installed is the best protection for your family 24/7, but if you don't have one increasing your fire awareness and taking a few simple steps to prevent fires can go a long way towards keeping you and your family safe.”

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The mission of the New Jersey Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board (NJFSAB) is to save lives and protect property by educating the public about fire safety, demonstrating the benefits and effectiveness of fire sprinklers in suppressing and reducing the impact of fires, and supporting fire-safe building codes and legislation. NJFSAB is a cooperative partnership advocating installation and proper care of fire sprinkler systems. Headquartered in Hamilton, N.J., the Board is comprised of unionized workers (Sprinkler Fitters Local 696), local leaders, code committee members, contractors and businesses who represent fire sprinkler construction, production, distribution and installation.