As families across the country celebrate the holidays, fire fighters encourage you to take a few moments as you decorate to make sure your holidays are safe as well as festive.

When it comes to fire prevention this season, Christmas trees, candles, and electric cords and outlets an all pose fire hazards.

CHRISTMAS TREE SAFETY TIPS
Before you bring your live tree into your home, trim at last 2 inches off the trunk to expose fresh wood. This will help the tree absorb water and keep needles from drying out too quickly. Also remember to make sure the tree is kept watered. If your family uses an artificial tree, make sure it’s labeled as *fire resistant*. All trees, artificial and live, should be kept at least three feet from fireplaces, radiators and other heat sources, including candles. When you put up your tree, make sure not to block doorways that could hinder your escape in case of a fire.

CANDLE/FIREPLACE SAFETY TIPS
Nearly one third of holiday decoration fires are started by candles. Be sure to extinguish all candles and fires before you go to bed or leave the house. An unattended candle only takes a moment to cause a fire. Place candles where they cannot be knocked down or blown over or ignite materials such as curtains or other decorations. Always keep candles, matches and lighters out of reach of children. Use a fireplace screen at all times when a fire is burning. Resist the urge to burn trees, wreaths or wrapping paper in your fireplace. These materials do not burn cleanly and cause creosote and other flammable materials to build up in the chimney. Check and clean the chimney and fireplace area at least once a year.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY TIPS
Only use indoor lights indoors and outdoor lights outdoors and choose the right ladder for the task when hanging lights. Replace light sets that have broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires or loose connections. Follow the package directions on the number of light sets that can be plugged into one socket. Never nail, tack or stress wiring when hanging lights and keep plugs off the ground and away from puddles and snow.

CONSIDER YOUR PETS
Pets are especially vulnerable to holiday accidents. Make sure that your ornaments, candles and lights are out of reach of pets – you don’t want them to eat or knock them over causing damage to your decorations, your home and the pet. Keep potentially poisonous plants – mistletoe, holly berries, Jerusalem cherry and amaryllis – away from pets.

And remember to follow your everyday safety routines this season. Fire fighters remind you to remain buckled up when traveling, whether to grandma’s house or just down the street.

From all our fire fighter families to yours – have a safe and happy holiday.