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HOLIDAY DECORATIONS INCREASE RISK OF FIRE

Glendale, Ariz. — Now that Thanksgiving is over, a majority of people's attention will turn to the heart of the holiday season. As residents begin hanging holiday lights and decorations, many of them do not realize that these decorations dramatically increase the risk of fire at their home.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), an estimated 240 home fires involving Christmas trees and another 150 home fires involving holiday lights and other decorative lighting occur each year. Together, these fires result in 21 deaths and \$25.2 million in direct property damage.

The Glendale Fire Department encourages everyone to follow these simple safety tips to ensure a safe and happy holiday season.

- Check holiday lights, even new ones, for damage. Lights packed in small containers may have frayed wires, gaps in the insulation, or broken or cracked lights. Always return or throw away any set of lights that are damaged.
- Use only lighting listed by an approved testing laboratory.
- Never link more than three light strands together, unless done by a professional electrician.
- Check your lights on a daily basis to make sure they are cool to touch. They should never get warm.
- When leaving your house, always unplug internal and external holiday lights.
- All decorations including Christmas trees should be nonflammable or flame retardant.
- Make sure decorations do not block exits.
- Never leave a candle burning unattended.
- Keep candles clear of curtains, decorations and other combustibles.
- Open flames like candles should never be on or near a Christmas tree.
- Do not burn holiday wrapping paper in the fireplace because the coating on it could cause a flash fire.

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