

Care, Common Sense Called Best Insurance for A Happy Celebration of the Holidays

By ALICE E. MORGAN

The annual plea for holiday caution again is made by Fire Chief V. W. Griffith and the Birmingham fire prevention bureau.

Chief Griffith points out that one of the most common of Christmas decorations is also one of the most dangerous and reminds all that the gala tree can become an instrument of death in a matter of seconds.

He, and bureau members, say first, the tree should be kept small, since it will present less flammable material and will not be so apt to be bumped constantly, jarring lights and causing shorts.

They urge that the tree be kept outside until ready for use and then located in the coolest part of the room selected. Be sure to turn off any radiators or registers located near the tree to keep it from drying out as much as possible.

Check all electric wires as the lights are strung and discard any showing frayed spots. Never locate the switch directly under the tree since sparks from plugging or unplugging may ignite dry needles. NEVER USE CANDLES ON THE TREE.

ANOTHER ELECTRICAL precaution is the elimination of electric trains and "villages" from immediately under the tree.

When leaving the home or retiring for the night, turn out the tree lights. Flash fire, coming while you are out or asleep, may destroy your home or cost human lives.

Lit cigarettes, cigars or pipes should not be taken close enough to make contact with the tree and ash trays should be kept at a reasonably safe distance from it.

No matter how pretty it is, nor how much the family would like to have it kept a few days longer, take the tree out as soon as the needles begin to fall, the chief urges. That is the sign of complete dryness, coming when the tree is at its most "explosive" point.

THE BUREAU also urges care and common sense in the use of decorations. Never use paper or cotton unless it has first been fire-proofed. When buying new insist on knowing whether or not it has been so treated.

Church and school programs often call for elaborate costumes during the Christmas season. Avoid them if possible, but if not, make sure that safety is observed in special lighting.

Do not permit the use of lighted candles around a stage, nor frayed light wires. Although these con-

ditions may be very beautiful and the children look particularly aise in them, remember they are excellent fire food.

In your home, close your eyes to the beauty of the gay Christmas wrappings and dispose of them as soon as the packages are all unwrapped.

WHILE COMMON SENSE tells us to use a fireplace screen at all times, it is especially true at this time of year. Often the home is crowded with guests, some wearing "holiday" clothes. A chance spark may turn your open home into a tragic house.

Don't buy the children toys which are powered with gasoline, kerosene or other flammable liquids. Don't permit the use of spark producing toys inside the home. When you buy, insist that all electrical toys bear the seal of approval of the Underwriter's Laboratory.

When you have decided where to put the tree and where to set up that shiny new electric train with its yards of track, you may find one plug, already in use for floor and table lamps available.


Resist that human impulse to put in another plug and save buying an extension cord to bring a light from across the room.

Buy that cord, string the wire where it cannot trip anyone, and be safe. Remember that an overloaded circuit can end your holiday in tragedy and pain.

Finally, remember that you can have all the extra trappings for a gay holiday if you let common sense guide you. Do this, and have a Very Merry Christmas!

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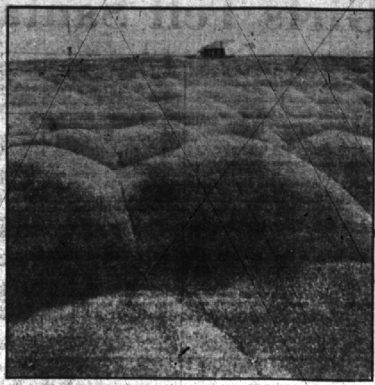
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