

often great tragedy lies ahead for the little curly-headed tots who grow up among us adults. We, too, once were like them, happy, laughing, innocent, hopeful. But, alas! how so much of the practical realities of life try to extinguish childhood's faith.

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Fire Chief Outlines Safe Christmas Plan

By CHIEF V. W. GRIFFITH

The Christmas and New Year holiday season creates the greatest danger of fire in homes and public gathering places than any other holiday season of the year. This danger is caused mostly by two factors: first, because the holiday is celebrated indoors and second, because of the accompanying decorations and wrappings.

It is therefore the urgent request of the fire department that each home owner and operator of a building of public assembly be as fire conscious as possible to avoid tragedy during the coming yuletide.

The first thing to be cautious of is the selection of the Christmas tree and any other supposedly green or fresh cut boughs.

When selecting the Christmas tree select one not too large or top heavy and check it by brushing the needles. If they drop off it is an old tree, cut very early in the season. Another way to detect old trees is to turn a small branch or sprout backwards, if it snaps and breaks off cleanly, it is an old tree. Do not purchase such a tree for it means danger in your home.

WHEN YOU have found a fresh tree that satisfies you, plan on setting it up in your home not earlier than a week before Christmas. Before you set it up, cut at least an inch or two off the bottom for a fresh cut that will absorb the moisture.

With a small hand saw, cut

three or four slots not over two or three inches high on the base of the tree, to enable it to absorb more moisture.

Set and adjust the tree firmly in a holder which is designed to keep water around its base. Detail the filling of this water reservoir daily to one member of the family.

Locate the three in a remote corner of the room away from the fireplace and area where packages will be unwrapped. Also keep it out of an area where traffic is heavy.

When decorating a tree use only approved electric lights. Be sure the cords and sockets are good. If they are not, discard them or have them repaired. It is not recommended that more lights be added to a string than the number it was designed for.

Use only the size bulb designed for tree lights and do not over-fuse the circuit supplying these lights.

Fifteen amp fuses are the heaviest that should be used in these household circuits. A heavier fuse is inviting trouble.

DO NOT USE cotton batten or flammable material for snow effects at the base of the tree. Mineral wool or spun glass will give the same effect safely.

Avoid the use of Christmas tree decorations of articles made of thick white cake material, which is highly inflammable. These items made most frequently are stars, Christmas cards, balls and miniature Christmas trees.

Never set up electric trains or other heat and spark producing toys under or near Christmas trees. Keep Christmas trees and their electric lights away from steam radiators and water pipes directly connected to natural ground for if either wire of a tree light circuit shorts on these objects, fire is always the result. Remove wrappings which have been discarded and burn them outside.

GREAT WADS of them cannot be burned in a fireplace for the flues of a chimney are not large enough to draw up so much combustion and fire backs into the room. Then too, many of the wrappings are made of highly explosive cellophane.

Do not use candles on Christmas trees or in windows, as curtains and drapes may catch fire. To be sure and safe do not leave your interior Christmas tree lights on while you are away from home or when you go to bed.

After Christmas when the needles of your tree start dropping on the floor the tree gets more dangerous and should be taken down and disposed of.

Keep plenty of good ash trays around the home during this season. Finally, be ready in case emergency strikes.

IT TAKES ONLY a few minutes to do these common sense things:

1. Check fire extinguishers or put the garden hose where it will be handy.

2. Be sure everyone knows how to call the fire department, and keep the number near the telephone. Panic often numbs the memory.

3. Lastly, do what you can safely to prevent fire spread. Keep a clear exit behind you.

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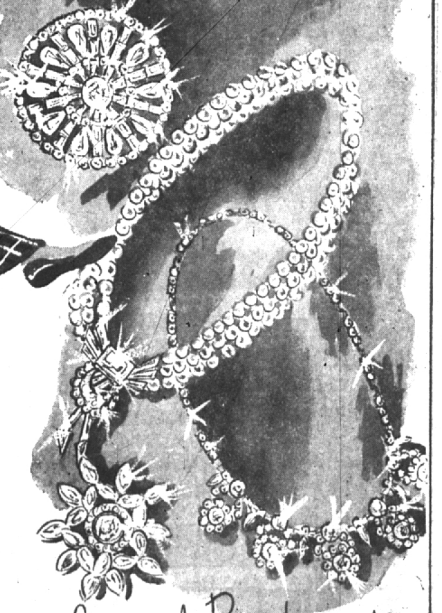
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