

Care Required in Placing, Decorating Christmas Tree

It is the night before Christmas . . .

But not everyone sleeps. In fire stations there's an air of uneasy tension.

Fires at Christmas time are particularly tragic at this the happiest holiday of the year. On this most sentimental day thousands of homes and apartments are carelessly and unwittingly converted into dangerous fire traps—regardless of warnings by fire department officials and safety authorities.

Two years ago fires on Christmas eve killed 23 persons, most of them children, and in the four-day week-end last year took the lives of 54.

This year, for instance, the nation's fire losses may well be over a billion dollars, the death toll close to 10,800, according to the National Board of Fire Underwriters. Over 300,000 fires, the National Board declares, were in the home.

You can save your life and you can prevent fires by observing the following suggestions offered at this time by the National Board:

• The Christmas tree is a potential fire hazard and caution should be taken in its selection, placement in the home, and maintenance.

• Play safe by choosing a small one. There will be 30 million on the market.

• Keep the tree outdoors until ready to set it up. While it's outdoors, occasionally throw water over it. This will keep it moist, fresh.

• When you bring the tree inside, cut the butt slantwise to open the pores, then stand it in a tub of water or moist earth.

• Be cautious of chemicals or other substances sold for "fire-proofing" trees. In some cases this process is ineffective.

• In placing the tree, it's best to avoid "hot spots" such as those near the fireplace, stove, television set, radiator, or electric bulbs.

• Never use untreated paper ornaments or untreated cotton batting or gauze for decoration. Cotton and gauze can be made flame-resistant by dipping in a gallon of water mixed with nine ounces of borax and four ounces of boric acid.

• Use only electric lights, never candles. Be sure, too, that wires are in good condition and bear the UL mark denoting Underwriters' Laboratories, Inc., which shows they have been tested for safety. Frayed electric cords are a fire hazard.

• The switch for turning on the tree lights should be placed some distance from the tree. Never use an outlet or plug under the tree or run electric trains around the base.

• If decorations are used about the house, do not permit them around or near chairs and other places where people may smoke. It is preferable to have them near the ceiling, well above the head of anyone standing up.

• Keep plenty of ash trays handy during the holiday season, as always.

• If lights are desired in windows, never use candles. Keep curtains and other flammable material pulled back at least six inches from any electric light.

• Use non-flammable decorations of glass or metal, and "fireproof" snow in decorating your tree for Christmas.

• After you have opened your Christmas presents, remove all the gift wrappings and packing materials from your living room and dispose of them.

Chief Urges Fire Safety

As the first yule lights signal the start of the Christmas season, Fire Chief J. J. Benner cautions residents about keeping tree decorations and flammable wrappings away from heaters, particularly open flame, unvented heaters.

"This type of heating equipment can be a definite fire hazard if not properly used," Chief Benner warned.

When there is an open flame . . . whether it is from a Christmas candle or a space heater . . . in the room, utmost caution should be used so that it does not come in contact with tree decorations, gift wrappings, clothing, drapes, furniture and other flammable material, he said.

Throughout the damp winter weather, particularly when the temperature drops to 45 degrees or lower, residents

should use care with these heaters, Benner explained. "Whenever an unvented heater is in use, windows should be opened to assure ventilation, and heaters should be kept out of foot traffic patterns of the rooms," he said.

"Don't spoil your Christmas season," Benner added, "if you are using one of these heaters, have it checked periodically by the gas company or a reliable service agency . . . or better, have it replaced with a vented heater that carries the products of combustion out of the house through a vent pipe and has the gas burner completely enclosed to eliminate the fire hazard."

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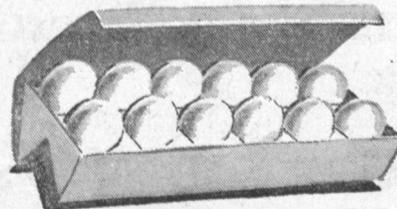
Farm labor contractors who wish to renew their licenses for 1958 should get their applications in immediately, State Labor Commissioner Edward P. Park warned.

"We are having unusual delay in processing renewal applications this year because of new laws with which many labor contractors are not yet familiar," Park said.

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Guam, acquired by the U. S. from Spain in 1898, was occupied by the Japanese for 3½ years during World War II. **SECURE WORKERS** the easy way—through Help Ads in Torrance Press. Dial FA 8-2345 for an ad-writer. I have defined a speculator as a man who observes the future and acts before it occurs.—Bernard M. Baruch.



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WHAT'S DOING
R. S. Pyle, your Telephone Manager in Torrance

Season's Greetings

Here's a suggestion to help you avoid possible delay and disappointment in placing Christmas calls to folks back East this year. If you make your call a few days before or after Christmas Day, you will be more sure of the fast service you've come to expect. However, all the lines will be very busy on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, and there's bound to be some delay, and some calls may not get through at all.

The men and women of Pacific Telephone wish you all a most happy holiday season.



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