



## Home Fires Involving Christmas Trees or Holiday Lights Fact Sheet

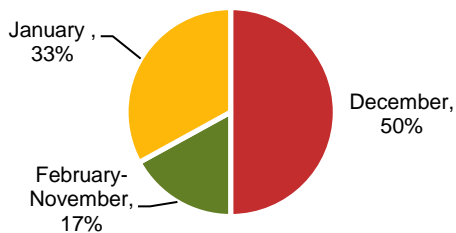
### *Christmas Tree Fires*

U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated annual average of 240 home<sup>1</sup> structure fires that began with Christmas trees in 2005-2009. These fires caused an annual average of

- 13 civilian fire deaths,
- 27 civilian fire injuries, and
- \$16.7 million in direct property damage

On average, one of every 18 reported home Christmas tree fires resulted in a death, compared to an average of one death per 141 total reported home fires.

**Home Structure Fires in Which Christmas Trees Were First Ignited by Month: 2005-2009**



Five of every six Christmas tree fires occurred in December or January. Forty-two percent of home Christmas tree structure fires occurred on the twelve days from December 23 through January 3.

Electrical problems were factors in one-third (33%) of home Christmas tree structure fires.

A heat source was too close to the Christmas tree in one of every five (20%) of these fires.

Thirteen percent of home Christmas tree fires involved decorative lights.

Candles started 11% of home Christmas tree structure fires.

Two of every five (39%) home Christmas tree fires started in the living room, family room, or den.

Eighteen percent of home Christmas tree structure fires were intentionally set. Half of the intentional Christmas tree fires occurred in January and may have been related to disposal.

### *Fires Involving Holiday Lights or Other Decorative Lighting with Line Voltage*

Holiday or other decorative lights with line voltage were involved in an average of 150 home structure fires per year, resulting in an average of

- 8 civilian deaths,
- 14 civilian injuries, and
- \$8.5 million in direct property damage.

Almost half (45%) of these fires were reported in December and 13% occurred in January.

In one of every six (17%) of these fires, Christmas trees were the item first ignited.

Electrical problems were factors in three-quarters (73%) of these fires. Something that could burn was too close to the lights in 15% of the fires.

**Leading Items First Ignited in Holiday Light Home Structure Fires**



Falls are also a problem. A study found that roughly 5,800 people per year were treated at hospital emergency rooms for falls associated with holiday decorations during November to January.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Homes are dwellings, duplexes, manufactured homes, apartments, townhouses, and rowhouses.

<sup>2</sup>J.A. Stevens and M Vajami. "Fall-Related Injuries During the Holiday Season -- United States, 2000-2003," *MMWR Weekly*, December 10, 2004, 53(48); 1127-1129, online at <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5348a1.htm>.