



# EL DORADO COUNTY REGIONAL FIRE PROTECTION STANDARD

## Christmas Trees in Commercial Buildings

STANDARD #E-002

EFFECTIVE 05-27-2009

### PURPOSE:

In 2002-2005, U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated average of 210 home structure fires that began with Christmas trees. These fires caused an average of 24 civilian deaths, 27 civilian injuries, and \$13.3 million in direct property damage per year. Although these fires are not common, when they do occur, they are unusually likely to be severe. On average, one of every nine home structure Christmas tree fires resulted in a death, compared to an average of one death per 75 home structure fires overall and one death per 131 total home structure fires.

### SCOPE:

To provide the business community in El Dorado County with the requirements for the use of live cut trees to reduce the risk of fires.

### AUTHORITY:

The 2007 California Fire Code and amendments as adopted by the Fire Department.

### REQUIREMENTS:

Prior to the placement of any natural or resin bearing tree in a public building, the following regulations shall be followed:

- 1) Select a fresh tree by looking for one that is green. The needles of pines and spruces should bend and not break and should be hard to pull off the branches. On fir species, a needle pulled from a fresh tree will snap when bent, much like a fresh carrot. Also, look for a trunk sticky with sap.
- 2) Trees shall be sprayed with an approved flame retardant.
- 3) Cut off about two inches of the trunk prior to placing the tree in the tree stand.
- 4) A tag shall be present on the tree which states the date of placement, the type of flame retardant treatment used the name of the person who sprayed the flame retardant, the name of the person affixing the tag, and the name of the person making the daily tests.
- 5) A support device is used that holds the tree upright securely, doesn't damage the tree or require removal of the tree stem base and is capable of holding a two-day minimum supply of water (there shall always be water in the holding area).

- 6) Testing of the tree's dryness must be performed daily by grasping a branch and pulling your hand towards your body. If needles fall off the branch readily, the tree must be removed immediately.
- 7) No candles or open flames shall be near the tree.
- 8) Only UL listed electric lights may be used.
- 9) Stand your tree away from fireplaces, radiators and other heat sources. Make sure the tree does not block foot traffic, doorways or exits.
- 10) If you use an artificial tree, choose one that is tested and labeled as fire resistant. Artificial trees with built-in electrical systems should have the Underwriters Laboratory (UL) label.
- 11) Properly dispose of live cut Christmas trees to a recycling center, do not burn.