

Tree can be dangerous Christmas fire safety tips

For most Canadian families the Yuletide season isn't complete without a Christmas tree well covered with attractive decorations and bright lights.

The tradition of illuminating Christmas trees dates back to Germany over 450 years ago. The story goes that Martin Luther, while walking home one night, was so impressed with the bright twinkling stars, that he put candles on his Christmas trees to illustrate their splendor to his family.

Now electric lights have replaced the flickering candle flame, but decorated trees still must be properly cared for so they will not be a fire hazard.

It is also suggested this year, in the interest of conserving energy, that Christmas trees and outdoor decorating should be lighted after 7.00 p.m., and for a short duration of time each night.

First concern
"Safety should be the foremost concern, when purchasing and installing your decorations this season," says Robert Price, electrical inspection superintendent in Ontario Hydro's Central Region.

To ensure a safe and happy holiday, unmarred by the dangers of fire, Mr. Price recommends the following Christmas safety suggestions.

1. When purchasing decorative lighting sets and electrical appliances be sure they bear the Canadian Standards Association seal of approval. The large "C" enclosing the letters "SA" means that your purchases have passed the severe approval tests of CSA which have been established for your protection.

2. Store the tree in a cool place until you put it up.

3. Keep it in a water-filled container.

4. Do not block an exit with the tree.

5. Make sure that all ornaments and things like cotton batting, placed at the base of the tree, are fireproof and that circuits aren't overloaded with holiday lights.

6. Check both indoor and

outdoor tree-lighting equipment for frayed wires, cracked or brittle insulation, broken lamp sockets or damaged plugs. Throw away or replace deteriorated lighting sets.

7. If a fuse blows, check first for defects in the lighting sets. If the trouble persists, call an electrical contractor for assistance.

8. Turn off the lights when you go out or leave the room.

9. Never use electric lights on metal Christmas trees and keep metal icicles away from lighting sets.

10. Manufacturers' instructions on lighting equipment should be followed carefully. The safety features built into them may be nullified by careless or improper handling.

11. Take down the tree as quickly as possible when the season is over and store all lights in a dry place. Outdoor sets should also be put away as the wiring deteriorates quickly from summer sun and heat.

12. When you purchase new appliances or electrical toys as gifts, examine each device for the CSA mark of approval.

These few safety tips from Ontario Hydro will assure that you do have a truly "Merry Christmas".

Christmas Dinners in The Good Old Days

How many people today could manage such a menu as this one? Here it is, right out of the diary of a Dixie plantation owner:

"We had for dinner oyster soup, besides boiled mutton, ham, boned turkey, wild ducks, partridges, plum pudding, sauterne, burgundy, sherry, and Madelra."

And what gourmet cook would care to cope with this one? It was served to hearty-eating miners in the Rockies in 1858. After oysters and pork, which were conventional "openers," the menu went on to elk, antelope, buffalo "smothered" and grizzly bear a la mode. In addition, there was Black Mountain squirrel, prairie dog, and mountain rats — followed with swans, cranes, and quail — the whole lot accompanied by wines.



JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM

"About this time Caesar Augustus, the Roman Emperor, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the nation. (This census was taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria.)

Everyone was required to return to his ancestral home for this registration. And because Joseph was a member of the royal line, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, King David's ancient home—journeying there from the Galilean village of Nazareth. He took with him Mary, his fiancée, who was obviously pregnant by this time.

And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born, and she gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped him in a blanket and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the village inn." (Luke 2:1-7)

—From *The Living Bible*

Religious Heritage of America
Washington, D. C.



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