

Ten tips for a fire-safe Christmas tree

1 The tree must not be placed next to a doorway, exit or emergency exit or in front of a cabinet housing a fire extinguisher. Do not place it in front of meter cabinets, fire alarms or control panels.

2 Christmas trees should not be placed close to sources of heat such as candles, lights, heaters or ashtrays.

3 Flame-resistant tinsel is the **best type of decoration**.

4 Do not use snow spray and avoid using dry fir-tree branches as decorations.

5 Make sure the tree is not able to fall over. Do not place the tree too close to curtains, for example.

6 The safest type is a certified flame-resistant artificial tree made from plastic. For those who simply have to have a real tree, opt for a living tree with a root ball and plant it in a pot with damp sand. Water it every couple of days and spray the branches every day with a spray bottle.

7 For lights, choose **small electric lights bearing a CE marking** (very low safety voltage and splash-proof), not candles.

8 Check the wiring on the lights, and make sure nobody can trip over the cable or extension lead.

9 When leaving the room, **unplug the lights from the socket**.

10 In the event of a fire:

- Try to remain calm.
- Call the fire brigade.
- Get everyone to safety.
- Close windows and doors.
- Pull the plug out of the socket.
- Only then use a fire extinguisher (if possible).