



Home Fires Involving Christmas Trees and Holiday Lights, 2003-2007

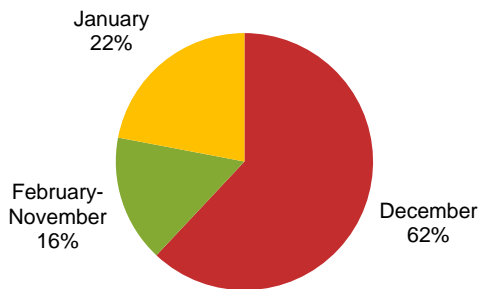
Christmas Tree Fires

U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated average of **250** home¹ structure fires that began with Christmas trees in 2003-2007. These fires caused an annual average of

- 14 civilian fire deaths
- 26 civilian fire injuries
- \$13.8 million in direct property damage

On average, one of every 18 reported home Christmas tree fires resulted in a death.

Home Structure Fires in Which Christmas Trees Were First Ignited by Month: 2003-2007



Thirty-six percent of home Christmas tree structure fires occurred on the ten days between December 24 and January 2.

Electrical problems were factors in nearly half (45%) of home Christmas tree structure fires.

A heat source was too close to the Christmas tree in one-quarter (26%) of the fires.

Twenty-three percent of home Christmas tree fires involved decorative lights.

Candles started 14% of home Christmas tree structure fires.

Half of all home Christmas tree fires started in the living room, family room, or den.

An average of 460 outside or unclassified Christmas tree fires occurred on home properties. Fifty-nine percent occurred in January; 86% were intentionally set.

Line-Voltage Holiday or Decorative Light Fires

Line-voltage holiday or decorative lights or were involved in an average of 170 home structure fires per year, resulting in an average of

- 7 civilian deaths,
- 17 civilian injuries, and
- \$7.9 million in direct property damage.

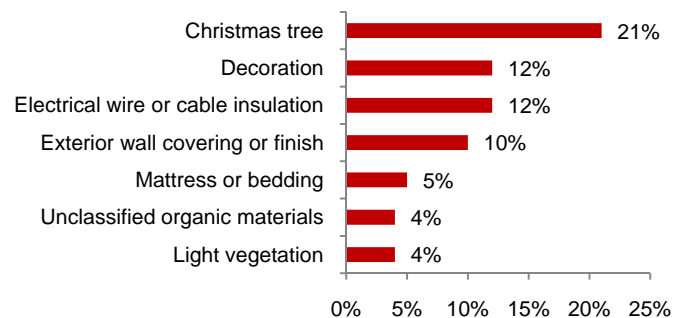
Forty-two percent of these fires were reported in December and 13% occurred in January.

In one-fifth (21%) of these fires, Christmas trees were the item first ignited.

Electrical problems were factors in 67% of these fires. Something that could burn was too close to the lights in 10% of the fires.

Roughly 5,800 people per year were treated at hospital emergency rooms for falls associated with holiday decorations.²

Leading items First Ignited in Holiday Light Home Structure Fires



¹Homes are dwellings, duplexes, manufactured homes, apartments, townhouses, and rowhouses.

²J.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>.