

# Hot Tips

## Fire safety advice that just might save your life

Strings of lights are flashing merrily. Holiday candles are flickering softly. The Christmas tree is shining, and the fireplace is aglow. Boxes and wrapping paper are everywhere!

### **Ho, ho, ho—what a happy scene. And uh-oh, what a fire hazard!**

Look closer. The strings of lights are old and some of the wires are frayed. The electrical outlets on the wall behind the tree are overloaded. Tangled wires run under the carpet. The candles are burning low. The tree is dry and standing too close to the fireplace. Papers and boxes are scattered carelessly near the fire.

The holiday season is a time to be extra careful about fire safety. Fires during this time of year cause more than \$930 million in damage and more than 500 deaths. Each year, Christmas trees cause about 400 fires. Those fires lead to an average of 10 deaths, 80 injuries, and more than \$15 million in property damage. Most tree fires occur at the end of the holiday season. The longer a cut tree stands, the drier it gets. And a dry tree is like a match ready to ignite.

Candles cause even more fires than Christmas trees do—about 1,600 fires each winter holiday season. Those fires lead to about 10 deaths, 115 injuries, and \$20 million in property damage.

## Did You Know?

- More than 40 percent of Christmas tree fires are caused by electrical problems with lighting.
- About 25 percent of tree fires are caused by a heat source that is close to a tree.
- Candles caused 8 percent of the Christmas-tree fires between 1999 and 2002.
- Children playing with lighters or matches cause about 7 percent of tree fires each year.

## Don't let your holiday go up in smoke.

Here are some fire safety tips from the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA).

- Keep natural tree stands full of water.
- Don't overload electrical outlets or connect more than three strands of lights together.
- Don't use worn strands of lights or other damaged electrical decorations.
- Use nonflammable decorations.
- Don't leave candles or decorative lights unattended.
- Don't burn wrapping paper or Christmas trees in fireplaces.
- Make sure your smoke detector has working batteries.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Which statement about fire hazards during the holidays is NOT true?
  - A Fires during the holidays cause more than \$930 million in damages.
  - B More than 500 deaths are attributed to holiday fires.
  - C Christmas trees cause more fires than candles do.
  - D Electrical problems and heat sources contribute to the fire dangers.
  
2. What is the purpose of the first paragraph in the passage?
  - A to prove that fire dangers can be prevented if certain safety precautions are taken
  - B to contrast with the image of hidden fire dangers illustrated in the next paragraph
  - C to surprise the reader about fire hazards during the holidays
  - D to illustrate how careless people are during the holidays
  
3. Which of the following is the least common cause of Christmas tree fires during the holiday season?
  - A heat sources that are too close to the Christmas tree
  - B children playing with matches
  - C electrical problems with lighting
  - D candles
  
4. Read this sentence from the passage: "The electrical outlets on the wall behind the tree are overloaded."

In this sentence, the word **overloaded** suggests that

  - A the electrical outlets have nothing plugged into them
  - B the electrical outlets have been made fire-proof
  - C the electrical outlets have a lot of plugs connected to them
  - D the electrical outlets have stopped working

5. What is the passage mainly about?

- A The passage is mainly about the most common objects that cause fires during the holidays.
- B The passage is mainly about how people can prevent fires during the holidays.
- C The passage is mainly about injuries caused from fires during the holidays.
- D The passage is mainly about holiday fire dangers and how to avoid them.

6. Describe the supporting evidence in the passage that is used to inform the reader about sources of tree fires.

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7. Explain the safety measures needed to avoid the fire risks described in the second paragraph.

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8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

\_\_\_\_\_ the holiday season poses a lot of fire dangers, there are safety measures that can be taken against them.

- A However
- B Therefore
- C Although
- D Otherwise

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

The U.S Fire Administration recommends that worn strands of lights and other damaged electrical decorations not be used because of the likelihood that they will spark fires.

What? the U.S Fire Administration

(does) What? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

10. **Vocabulary Word:** frayed: to be worn so often that it has reached the point of tearing or unraveling.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Teacher Guide &amp; Answers

**Passage Reading Level:** Lexile 850

**Featured Text Structure:** Descriptive – the writer explains, defines, or illustrates a concept or topic

**Passage Summary:** The passage provides information about fire dangers of the holiday season and provides safety tips from the U.S Fire Administration about how to prevent holiday fires.

1. Which statement about fire hazards during the holidays is NOT true?
  - A Fires during the holidays cause more than \$930 million in damages.
  - B More than 500 deaths are attributed to holiday fires.
  - C **Christmas trees cause more fires than candles do.**
  - D Electrical problems and heat sources contribute to the fire dangers.
  
2. What is the purpose of the first paragraph in the passage?
  - A to prove that fire dangers can be prevented if certain safety precautions are taken
  - B **to contrast with the image of hidden fire dangers illustrated in the next paragraph**
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3. Which of the following is the least common cause of Christmas tree fires during the holiday season?
  - A heat sources that are too close to the Christmas tree
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  - A the electrical outlets have nothing plugged into them
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5. What is the passage mainly about?
  - A The passage is mainly about the most common objects that cause fires during the holidays.
  - B The passage is mainly about how people can prevent fires during the holidays.
  - C The passage is mainly about injuries caused from fires during the holidays.
  - D **The passage is mainly about holiday fire dangers and how to avoid them.**

6. Describe the supporting evidence in the passage that is used to inform the reader about sources of tree fires.

**Suggested answer:** More than 40 percent of Christmas tree fires are caused by electrical problems with lighting. In addition, 25 percent of tree fires are caused by a heat source that is close to a tree. Furthermore, children playing with lighters or matches cause about 7 percent of tree fires each year. [list underneath "Did You Know?" headline]

7. Explain the safety measures needed to avoid the fire risks described in the second paragraph.

**Suggested answer:** The strings of lights should not be connected with more than two other strands of lights, while the electrical outlets should not be overloaded with many plugs. Wires should not be placed and tangled underneath the carpet, and candles should not be left unattended and should not be left to burn to the very end of the wick. The Christmas tree itself should be positioned far from any sources of fire, including the fireplace, and should be kept in a stand full of water if it is a natural Christmas tree. Finally, any flammable objects, including papers and boxes, should be safely distanced from any sources of fire.

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

\_\_\_\_\_ the holiday season poses a lot of fire dangers, there are safety measures that can be taken against them.

- A However
- B Therefore
- C **Although**
- D Otherwise

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

The U.S Fire Administration recommends that worn strands of lights and other damaged electrical decorations not be used because of the likelihood that they will spark fires.

What? the U.S Fire Administration

(does) What? **recommends that worn strands of lights and other damaged electrical decorations not be used**

Why? **because of the likelihood that they will spark fires**

10. **Vocabulary Word:** frayed: to be worn so often that it has reached the point of tearing or unraveling.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: answers may vary.