

# **Massachusetts Fire Marshall: “Start the New Year off right: promptly dispose of natural Christmas trees”**

State Fire Marshal Peter J. Ostroskey said, “Start the new year off right: promptly dispose of your Christmas tree. A dried out Christmas tree will ignite quickly and spread a fire very fast.”

## **Dried Out Trees Are Fuel for Fires Indoors and Out**

Over the past few years, there have been several fires involving Christmas trees that had dried out. If trees are up early, they can dry out before Christmas. Ostroskey said, “Keep the tree watered, and away from all heat sources. After Christmas, dispose of your tree promptly. If a fire should start for any reason, a tree will help spread the fire extremely rapidly.”

On January 3, 2020 at 4:30 p.m., the Westfield Fire Department responded to a Christmas tree fire in a single-family home. The fire began in the living room. No one was injured. The home did not have sprinklers and damages were estimated to be \$160,000.

On January 6, 2020 at 9:59 p.m., the Belmont Fire Department responded to a Christmas tree fire in a single-family home. The fire began in the living room where a nearby candle ignited an extremely dry tree. Smoke alarms operated and no one was injured. The home did not have sprinklers and damages were estimated at \$2,500.

## **Disposal of the Tree**

Take advantage of community pick-up days or recycling programs, many of which start next week. To find out if your

community has a Christmas tree recycling program, contact your local public works department or recycling committee. The Mass. Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) has information on Christmas tree recycling at: <https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2018/02/05/xmastree-recycling.pdf>. Some local goat farms accept bare tree and wreath donations as they are looking for greens things to eat.

On January 2, 2020, at 5:15 p.m., the Sheffield Fire Department was called to a chimney fire in a restaurant. The owner was trying to burn a Christmas tree in the fireplace. No one was injured at this fire.

State Fire Marshal Ostroskey said, "Don't put your Christmas tree curbside until the day of pick up to avoid providing an opportunity for arson."

On December 27, 2019, at 9:01 p.m., the Quincy Fire Department responded to an outside Christmas tree fire that had been intentionally set on fire.

On December 31, 2019, at 11:13 p.m., the Fall River Fire Department responded to an outside Christmas tree fire. The tree was on the sidewalk ready for curbside collection when it was intentionally set on fire.

For more information on fire safety, contact your local fire department or the Office of the State Fire Marshal at 1-877-9 NO FIRE or on-line at [www.mass.gov/dfs](http://www.mass.gov/dfs).



## Get rid of your Christmas tree after Christmas or when it is dry.

A dry tree is dangerous.  
It can catch on fire easily.



FEMA



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