

Township of  
**Langley**



Est. 1873



**CANADA 150**

## **NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 14, 2017**

### **KEEP CHRISTMAS MERRY, BRIGHT – AND SAFE**

With halls to deck, treats to bake, and gifts to wrap, there is a lot to do during the busy, bustling holiday season. But simply taking a few moments to think ahead and be prepared could result in the best gift of all – your family's safety.

“Things can get hectic with all the fun and festivities that happen at Christmastime,” said Krista Barton, Township of Langley Public Life Safety Educator, “but there are potential hazards associated with this season. We encourage everyone to slow down, think, and plan ahead. By taking a few precautions, you can reduce the chance of your home and loved ones coming to harm.”

Christmas trees are a huge part of our holiday traditions, and safety starts before you even bring one home. When choosing a tree, make sure it has fresh, green needles that do not fall off when touched. They are more fire-resistant than those with dry, brittle needles.

Before putting the tree in its stand, cut two inches from the bottom of the trunk so it can better absorb water and avoid drying out. Add water to the stand every day and check the level frequently. Christmas trees can drink large amounts of water, especially if they are pre-cut, and can take up to one litre per day for each inch of stem diameter.

Ensure the tree is located at least three feet away from heat sources such as fireplaces or candles, and that it does not block any exits.

To illuminate the tree, use lights that have the label of an independent testing laboratory, such as CSA or ULC, Barton said, noting that some lights are only for indoor or outdoor use. Any strings of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections should be replaced. When using Christmas lights or any other electrical appliances for decorating, be sure to read and follow all safety precautions listed by the manufacturer.

Never use lit candles to decorate the Christmas tree and always turn the tree lights off before leaving the home or going to bed.

“Dried-out Christmas trees are fire hazards: they should be disposed of in an environmentally-friendly way as soon as Christmas is over or when they get dry,” Barton added. “Never leave dry trees in the home or garage, or placed against the side of the house.”

Following the holiday season, trees can be recycled at chipping events offered by local fundraising organizations. Look for a listing of tree chipping events on the Township’s website at **tol.ca** and on the Township Page in local newspapers.

Township of Langley residents who receive municipal waste collection services can also leave Christmas trees out for pickup beside their Green Carts, as they would with regular branch bundles. Christmas tree branches must be no more than 7.62 cm (three inches) in diameter and tied with string or twine for a maximum bundle size of .5m wide (20 inches) x 1 metre (39 inches) long. Christmas trees may need to be cut in half. For more information, visit **tol.ca/greencart**.

All decorations and tinsel need to be completely removed from trees before collection or chipping, and plastic tree bags should be recycled.

*For more information, call the Township of Langley Fire Department at 604.532.7500.*