



FACT SHEET » RESEARCH

Home Christmas Tree Fires

U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated annual average of 200 home¹ structure fires that began with Christmas trees in 2011–2015. These fires caused an annual average of 6 civilian deaths, 16 civilian injuries, and \$14.8 million in direct property damage.

Although Christmas tree fires are not common, when they do occur, they are much more likely to be deadly than most other fires.

- ▶ On average, one out of every 32 reported home Christmas tree fires resulted in a death, compared to an average of one death per 143 reported home fires.

Four of every five Christmas tree fires occurred in December or January.

- ▶ More than two of every five Christmas tree fires (42%) happened in December. More than one-third (37%) were in January.

Leading causes of Christmas tree fires

Electrical distribution or lighting equipment was involved in two of every five (40%) home Christmas tree fires.

- ▶ Decorative lights were involved in 18%.
- ▶ Wiring or related equipment was involved in 13%.
- ▶ Cords or plugs were involved in 6%.

Electrical failures or malfunctions were factors in one-quarter (25%) of Christmas tree fires. Any type of equipment that uses electricity can have an electrical failure.

One-quarter (24%) of Christmas tree fires were intentional. Almost half (48%) of these intentional fires occurred in January.

Heating equipment was involved in 15% of the Christmas tree fires.

6% of Christmas tree fires were started by someone playing with fire.

Candles started 8% of home Christmas tree structure fires.

- ▶ In one-quarter (26%) of the Christmas tree fires and in 80% of the deaths, a type of heat source, such as a candle or equipment, was too close to the tree.

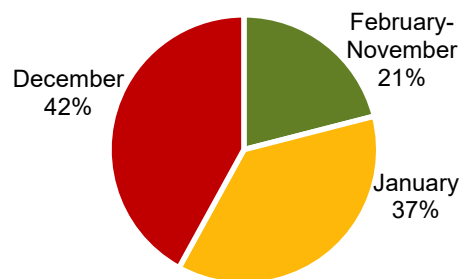
Leading areas of origin

More than one-third (37%) of home Christmas tree fires started in a living room, family room, or den. All of the fatalities and roughly three-quarters (72%) of the injuries resulted from fires started in these areas.

6% were chimney or flue fires.

To learn more about holiday safety, see NFPA's [Winter Holiday Safety Tips](#).

Home structure fires in which Christmas trees were first ignited, by month: 2011-2015



¹Homes include one- or two-family homes and apartments or other multi-family housing.

Source: NFPA Research: www.nfpa.org/research
Contact information: 617-984-7451 or research@nfpa.org



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