

FOR RELEASE #07-274

December 18, 2007

**YUKON FIRE MARSHAL URGES FIRE SAFETY FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON**

WHITEHORSE - On behalf of all Yukon Fire chiefs, Yukon Fire Marshal Marty Dobbin is urging Yukoners to put fire safety awareness at the top of their holiday to-do list.

The Christmas season presents opportunities for fire risks not present throughout the rest of the year, which require some special attention,” Dobbin said. “Christmas trees in homes, greater use of candles, Yule logs in the fireplace and related social activities bring additional risks that home owners should be prepared for during the holiday season.”

He noted that many distractions during the rush leading up to Christmas and the relaxed mood during the holidays can lead to tragedy. Statistics indicate that the incidence of house fires rise with increased alcohol consumption. Kitchen fires are also more frequent during the holiday season.

The fire marshal offers the following tips and precautions when decorating your home this holiday season:

- Choose a fresh green tree which does not lose needles when tapped on the ground.
- Cut 2.5 centimetres (one inch) off the trunk, at a 45-degree angle to help absorb water.
- Leave the tree outside until ready to decorate.
- The tree stand should hold at least four litres (one gallon) of water.
- A two-metre (six-foot) tree will typically consume four litres of water every two days.
- Mix a commercial preservative with the water and check water level every day.
- Do not locate your tree near an exit.
- Secure the tree with wire to keep it from tipping.
- Keep tree away from floor heaters, fire places, or other heat sources (a fireplace should be equipped with an approved screen).
- A natural tree will dry out after 10 or 15 days inside and should be removed from the building as soon as possible after Christmas.
- Dispose of the tree properly and never burn in the fireplace.
- Use only C.S.A. approved interior lights with no more than three strands linked together.
- Use miniature lights, which have cool-burning bulbs and never use candles, even on artificial trees.

- Do not use indoor lights for outdoor uses and do not use outdoor lights indoors.
- Use only approved staples to hold lights to walls or window frames.
- Examine light strings each year and discard worn ones and replace with energy – friendly LED lights.
- Extension cords should be in good condition and not run under rugs or through doorways where they could be walked on, which may cause the insulation to become broken or worn.
- Recycle gift wrap and do not burn in woodstoves or fireplaces because the sudden heat can cause chimney fires.
- Keep an approved portable fire extinguisher handy.
- Never leave candles to burn unattended.
- Ensure smoke detectors are functioning as they should.
- Hosts are reminded to empty ashtrays frequently and in a safe manner using tin or steel cans.

Grease fires are one of the leading causes of home fires in Canada. Here's what to do if grease in a pot or pan catches fire:

- Smother the flames by covering the pan with a lid.
- Turn off the heat immediately.
- Use baking soda (flour can be explosive) on shallow grease fires.
- Never turn on the overhead fan, as this could spread the fire.
- Never throw water on a grease fire.

“The Christmas season is a time for celebration and sharing of family traditions,” Minister of Community Services Glenn Hart said. “I encourage Yukoners to be aware of the seasonal risks and take the recommended preventative measures to keep their families safe from harm over the holidays.”

For more Christmas safety information, visit the Yukon government homepage: [www.gov.yk.ca](http://www.gov.yk.ca) .

- 30 -

Contact:

Roxanne Vallevand  
Cabinet Communications  
(867) 633-7949  
[roxanne.vallevand@gov.yk.ca](mailto:roxanne.vallevand@gov.yk.ca)

Doug Caldwell  
Communications, Community Services  
(867) 667-8065  
[doug.caldwell@gov.yk.ca](mailto:doug.caldwell@gov.yk.ca)