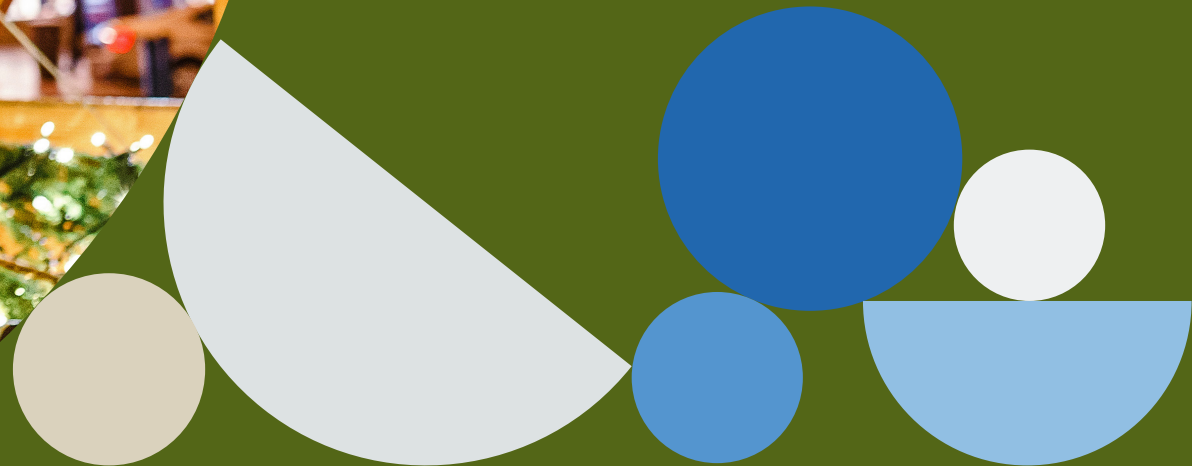




How safe is your Christmas tree?

A guide for community buildings, village halls, and schools



Make your Christmas tree safer over the festive season

The holiday season is a time of joy. For community buildings, village halls, and schools, a beautifully decorated tree can bring a sense of festivity and community spirit. Here are some essential tips on how to safely set up a Christmas tree in public spaces:

1. Selecting your tree

- For a real tree, select one that is fresh, with green needles that do not fall off easily and a trunk that is sticky with resin.
- For artificial trees, make sure they are labelled as fire-resistant, as these are less likely to catch fire and are generally safer for indoor use.
- Think about the size and stability of the tree. Choose a tree that fits comfortably within the space without blocking exits or walkways.

2. Securing your tree

- Go for a stand with a wide base, as this provides better stability and reduces the risk of the tree tipping over.
- Check the stand is big enough to fit the size of your tree.
- It should have a water reservoir to keep the tree from drying out and reducing the risk of it becoming a fire hazard.
- Consider anchoring your tree to a wall or ceiling using fishing line or wire to prevent it from tipping over.

3. Placing your tree

- Place the tree away from high-traffic areas to avoid accidental bumps.
- Ensure it is at least three feet away from any heat sources such as radiators, fireplaces, or heating vents.
- Avoid placing the tree near exit routes to keep them clear.
- Avoid running wires across the floor. If you have no other option, make sure they are secured with trunking etc.
- If you expect small children or animals, it can be worth cordoning off your tree. Curious hands (or paws) could make quick work of your hard work!



Make your Christmas tree safer over the festive season

Now that you have your Christmas tree in position and secure, it's time to light it up and decorate it for the festive celebrations. Here are our tips for doing it safely:

4. Lighting your tree

- Use lights that are labelled for indoor use and have been tested for safety. Look out for CE, UKCA, or BSI Kitemark.
- Do not use any lights with damaged/frayed wires or broken sockets.
- Do not overload electrical outlets; use a multi-socket extension cable with a built-in circuit breaker if necessary.
- Always turn off the lights at the socket when the building is empty.
- Replace old, incandescent lights with LED lights. LEDs use less energy and create less heat, reducing the risk of fire.

5. Decorating your tree

- Use non-combustible or flame-resistant materials for decorations.
- Avoid using sharp or breakable (especially glass) ornaments.
- Secure all decorations to prevent them from falling and causing injury.
- Keep decorations from making direct contact with light bulbs.
- Never use lit candles as tree decorations.
- Spread out ornaments and lights evenly to keep the tree balanced. An uneven tree can tip over.



Our fun fact:

You can tell how old a Christmas tree is approximately by adding two years to the height in foot. For example, a 7ft tree would be around 9 years old!

6. Care and Disposal

- For real trees, water the tree a minimum of 500ml daily to prevent it from drying out and becoming a fire hazard.
- Be careful not to overwater, as sitting water can go stagnant and start to smell.
- Once the holiday season is over, promptly remove the tree from the building. Do not leave it inside as it can dry out and become a fire risk.
- Follow local guidelines for tree disposal, whether that's curb-side pickup, recycling programs, or designated drop-off locations.





Fire safety precautions

- Ensure that there is a working fire extinguisher nearby and that staff/volunteers know how to use it.
- Check that smoke alarms are functional and have fresh batteries.
- Have an emergency evacuation plan in place and ensure that all staff and volunteers are familiar with it.
- Ensure fire exits and safety equipment are signposted and clear of obstructions.
- All signs and notices should be positioned so that they can be easily seen and understood.
- Conducting a fire risk assessment will help you determine the chances of a fire starting and help identify ways of reducing the risk.
- Ensure fire doors are kept shut and not left propped open.

Other useful resources:

- [Winter safety in community buildings | Zurich](#)
- [Protecting your pipes this winter | Zurich](#)
- [Organising Outdoor Charity Events this Autumn and Winter | Zurich](#)
- [Fire safety risk assessment: places of assembly | GOV.UK](#)

