

# FORGING THE FUTURE:



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## Friday FACTS

14 December 2001

"Leadership, Partnership, and Championship"

### HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS

#### Christmas Trees

A real tree can add to the spirit of Christmas by filling your home with beauty and the scent of pine. But a real tree can also pose a fire hazard. Each year, more than 400 residential fires involve Christmas trees and tragically nearly 40 deaths and 100 injuries result from those fires. Try to select a fresh tree by looking for one that is green. The needles of pines and spruces should bend and not break and should be hard to pull off the branches. On fir species, a needle pulled from a fresh tree will snap when bent, much like a fresh carrot. Also, look for a trunk sticky with sap. Cut off about two inches of the trunk and put the tree in a sturdy, water-holding stand. Keep the stand filled with water so the tree does not dry out quickly. Stand your tree away from fireplaces, radiators and other heat sources. Make sure the tree does not block foot traffic or doorways. If you use an artificial tree, choose one that tested and labeled as fire resistant. Artificial trees with built-in electrical systems should have the Underwriters Laboratory (UL) label.

#### Tree Lights

Only use indoor lights indoors (and outdoor lights only outdoors). Look for the UL label. Check lights for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections. Replace or repair any damaged light sets. Also, use no more than three light sets on any one extension cord. Extension cords should be placed against the wall to avoid tripping hazards, but do not run cords under rugs. Turn off all lights on trees and decorations when you go to bed or leave the house.

#### Tree Ornaments

Always use the proper step stool or ladder to reach high places. Read labels before you use materials that come in jars, cans and spray cans. Never place lighted candles on a tree or near any flammable materials. Avoid placing breakable tree ornaments or ones with small, detachable parts on lower branches where small children or pets can reach them. Do not hang popcorn chains and candy canes on the tree when small children are present. They may think that other tree ornaments are also edible.



### A Cure for the Winter Doldrums

Many people start to feel depressed in November and continue to feel as dark and dreary as the weather until the spring thaw. Scientists call severe depression that sets in during winter Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). Light and temperature play a significant role in SAD. Daylight prompts the brain to release chemicals that spark feelings of energy. For about five percent of the population, their mood grows darker when days grow shorter. Daily exposure to full-spectrum fluorescent light, which resembles sunlight, can help cure SAD.

Other tips for overcoming SAD include:

- Get outside as much as possible. SAD sufferers report they benefit more by exposure to early morning light than to light later in the day.
- Keep the drapes in your house open and the window shades raised during daylight hours.
- Sit near windows, and gaze outside periodically.
- On cloudy days, turn on bright lights.
- Don't isolate yourself during winter. Visit friends, go to museums, see shows anything to get out and about.
- Try to take your vacation in the winter instead of in the summer.

Source: *A YEAR OF HEALTH HINTS— 365 Practical Ways to Feel Better and Live Longer*  
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Thought For Today: "Failure is the opportunity to begin again more intelligently." - Henry Ford