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**“EVERYDAY HERO CT” SHARES HOLIDAY FIRE SAFETY ADVICE**  
***Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment Campaign Seeks to Prevent Fires***

**December 15, 2015 | Cromwell, CT** – December is historically one of the deadliest months for house fires. According to the [National Fire Protection Association](#) (NFPA), each year between 2009-2013, U.S. fire departments responded to an average of 210 home fires that started with Christmas trees. In addition, U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated annual average of 860 home structure fires that began with decorations, excluding Christmas trees.

Here are some of the numbers:

- Electrical distribution or lighting equipment was involved in 38 percent of home Christmas tree fires.
- One-fifth (20 percent) of the decoration fires started in the kitchen. One out of six (17 percent) started in the living room, family room, or den.
- The top three days for home candle fires were Christmas, New Year’s Day, and Christmas Eve.

“While Christmas trees, candles, and extra electrical demands create additional fire hazards this time of year, the good news is there are very simple ways to decorate and celebrate in a fire safe way,” says Chief Fred Dudek, Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association Volunteer Workforce Solutions program manager. “While our volunteer and career firefighters throughout the state are trained and ready to respond any time day or night, helping people prevent fires in the first place is always our top priority.”

When decorating this holiday season, be sure to:

- Use flameless candles near flammable objects – e.g., garland and mantle decorations.

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- Keep anything that can burn at least 12 inches away from a heat source.
- Do not over load electrical outlets. For more electrical safety tips, the [Electrical Safety Foundation International \(ESFI\) offers an online infographic.](#)
- Replace worn or broken cords and loose bulbs on strings of lights.
- Water live Christmas trees daily. When selecting a tree, test a needle. If it breaks when you try to bend it in half, the tree is already too dry. Pick a tree with needles that bend but do not break. [Well-hydrated trees burn more slowly than dry ones.](#)
- Blow out all candles and turn off all lights when going to bed or leaving the house.

Eighty percent of all fire personnel in Connecticut are volunteers, and the majority of fire departments throughout the state are experiencing a volunteer shortage. Local fire departments need volunteers of all skill levels and abilities, people willing and able to respond to emergencies whenever called upon.

“The skills and experience gained as a volunteer firefighter are invaluable and have a positive and lasting impact on the lives of others,” says Chief Dudek. “Those who join their local fire departments sign up for one of the most rewarding opportunities they’ll ever have.”

### ***About Volunteer Workforce Solutions (VWS)***

A partnership of the Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association (CFCA) and the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), the Volunteer Workforce Solutions (VWS) program Everyday Hero CT campaign is a two-year initiative designed to address the shortage of volunteer firefighters in Connecticut. It is helping achieve a viable and sustainable volunteer firefighter workforce for 15 Connecticut fire departments: Broad Brook Volunteer Fire Department, Cromwell Fire and EMS Department, Gales Ferry Volunteer Fire Company, Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company, Inc. (Salem), Greenwich Fire Department, Killingworth Volunteer Fire Department, Middlefield Volunteer Fire Company, Old Mystic Fire Department, Rocky Hill Fire Department, Somers Fire Department, Stamford Volunteer Firefighters Association, Trumbull Volunteer Fire Services, Westfield Fire Department (Middletown), Windsor Volunteer Fire Department, Wolcott Fire Department. Everyday Hero CT is funded by a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant awarded to the CFCA by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to develop a model to enhance the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. For more information, visit [www.EverydayHeroCT.org](http://www.EverydayHeroCT.org).

***About the Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association, Inc. (CFCA)***

Organized in 1902, the CFCA represents approximately 700 fire service professionals, both career and volunteer, from across the state of Connecticut. The mission of the organization is to promote the position of Chief Fire Officers as the leaders of the fire service through continuing education, unity in the fire service, safety, and professionalism as a fire officer. The association is involved in legislative issues, training, regulatory, and many other facets of the fire service. For more information, visit [www.ConnecticutFireChiefs.com](http://www.ConnecticutFireChiefs.com).

***About the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC)***

The IAFC represents the leadership of firefighters and emergency responders worldwide. IAFC members are the world's leading experts in firefighting, EMS, terrorism response, hazmat spills, natural disasters, search and rescue, and public-safety legislation. Since 1873, the IAFC has provided a forum for its members to exchange ideas, develop professionally, and uncover the latest products and services available to first responders. For more information, visit [www.iafc.org](http://www.iafc.org).

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