

NEWS FROM Legislator

Lou D'Amaro



SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE
17th Legislative District
130 West Jericho Turnpike
Huntington Station, NY 11746
Tel: (631) 854-4433
Fax: (631) 854-4415
Lou.Damaro@suffolkcountyny.gov



COMMITTEES:

CHAIRMAN– Ways & Means
VICE CHAIR – Parks & Recreation
VICE CHAIR – Economic Development
& Energy

For Immediate Release
Contact: Karen Klaffer (631) 854-4433

Give Your Family the Gift of Safety

Legislator D'Amaro Offers Tips On Keeping Your Home Fire-Safe During the Holiday Season

(HUNTINGTON STATION, NY... DECEMBER 17, 2013) – Each year, fire departments in the United States respond to an average of 230 home fires that started with Christmas trees. Christmas tree fires result in approximately 6 deaths, 22 injuries and \$18.3 million in property damage annually. To avoid a disaster this holiday season, Legislator Lou D'Amaro (D-Huntington Station) and Suffolk County Commissioner of Fire, Rescue and Emergency Services Joe Williams offer the following safety tips:

Placing and maintaining the Christmas tree:

Before inserting a cut tree in the stand, remove one to two inches from the base of the trunk. Position any tree – real or artificial - at least three feet away from baseboards, fireplaces and all other heat sources. One-fifth of tree fires start due to a heat source being too close to the tree. Keep your Christmas tree well-watered; the average 6-foot tree can consume up to one gallon of water per day. Artificial trees should be checked to make sure they are certified and identified by the manufacturer as fire resistant or retardant.

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Lighting the tree:

Use only non-combustible decorations. Check and replace worn or damaged light sets or wires IMMEDIATELY and use only U.L. or F.M. approved lights. Do not run wiring for trees or other indoor displays under rugs and carpets and NEVER use candles on or near a tree. Disconnect lights at bedtime or while away from the house, make sure smoke detectors are in place and operating properly and have a family escape plan ready in the event of an emergency.

Safety around candles:

Never leave a lit candle unattended. According to the National Fire Protection Association, almost 40 percent of all fires occurred after candles were left unsupervised or inadequately controlled. Do not place candles where a family pet could knock them over. Always extinguish all candles before going to bed.

Taking down the tree:

It's not a contest to see who can keep the tree in their home the longest. Check the needles and when the tree gets dry, dispose of it. Trees set up during Thanksgiving should come down prior to New Years.

“Enjoy the excitement of the holiday season, but, amidst the planning and festivities, please take every precaution necessary to keep you, your family and your home safe,” Legislator D’Amaro said.

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Suffolk County Legislator Lou D’Amaro represents the 17th Legislative District, which includes parts of Huntington, Huntington Station, South Huntington, Melville, West Hills, Cold Spring Hills, Dix Hills, Deer Park, North Babylon and West Babylon. He is chairman of the Ways & Means committee and vice chairman of both the Parks & Recreation and Economic Development & Energy committees of the Suffolk County Legislature.