

Holiday Safety

Light Safety During the Holidays

(NAPS)—While for many businesses, homeowners, and renters, decorating with lights is a festive holiday tradition, it's important to keep safety in mind. Here are a few simple tips from National Grid on how to celebrate in a safe and energy-efficient way:

Limit light use: Running lights for hours on end can be both dangerous and costly. Wait until dark to turn on holiday lights and be sure to unplug them before going to bed or leaving the house. A good rule of thumb is to keep lights plugged in for no more than six hours each day.

Aim for energy efficiency: Upgrading to LED bulbs from traditional incandescent mini bulbs can be both cost effective and energy efficient. LED bulbs use up to 90 percent less energy and can last 25 times longer than incandescent bulbs. Additionally, using a light timer and an advanced power strip to cut power to decorations when they are turned off can minimize energy usage.

Keep lights updated: When purchasing lights, look for the Underwriters Laboratories label to indicate that they have been tested and met industry safety standards. Before decorating, take a minute to look for any frayed wires, damaged sockets, cracked insulation, and burned out or missing bulbs to avoid electric shock. Also, read all labels to make sure light sets are correctly deployed and determine whether they are designed for indoor or outdoor use.

Practice tree smarts: According to the National Fire Protection Association, 45 percent of Christmas tree fires are related to faulty or misused lighting and electricity. Play it safe by keeping natural trees consistently watered. Additionally, keep all extension cords and light strings away from the tree stand and water bowl. When buying an artificial tree, look for one with an Underwriters Laboratories label to ensure it has been tested for fire and electrical safety. Don't overload branches with too many decorations or hang ornaments on lighting wires. Finally, avoid electric-powered decorations when decorating a tree with metallic needles or branches.

Be on guard outdoors: Always be



It's a bright idea to keep safety in mind when decorating for the holidays.

aware of your surroundings when decorating outside, as contact with power lines can lead to serious or fatal injuries. Decorations cannot be hung on or even near live electrical supply lines. Keep decorations at least 10 feet away from power lines and maintain that same distance when using an aluminum ladder. All lights, cords, plugs, and sockets should be rated for outdoor or all-weather conditions, and protect cords by keeping them off the ground or using waterproof cord covers. All exterior lighting should be plugged into ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI), which automatically cut power when faults occur to prevent electric shock.

Don't get overloaded: A common danger with decorating for the holidays is overloading your electrical circuits, which can trip breakers and fuses. To avoid this, check the fuse or breaker panel to determine circuit capacity and never double-up extension cords or power strips. Older homes generally have circuits that carry a maximum of 1800 watts each, while newer homes' circuits can carry a maximum of 2400 watts.

The holidays should be a time of joy and peace. Lights can help make things festive and bright. Keeping these safety tips in mind can help you enjoy a stress-free holiday. As always, National Grid will continue working every day to build and maintain a smarter, stronger, cleaner electric system that reliably and affordably powers your celebrations year-round.

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