



Safety First

Keep Your Holidays Happy

Electrical bills always rise during the holiday season because of the significant increase in the amount of energy we use. The heaters kick in more often, the Christmas lights go up and we spend more time at home in the winter.

The winter holiday season is a time for family, friends and fun. Unfortunately, Christmas plans can be spoiled by unexpected electrical accidents if precautions are not taken beforehand.

Here are some tips to keep your family safe at home this holiday season:

- Do not put more than three strings of lights onto one extension cord.
- Try to avoid overloading outlets. Signs of overloaded circuits include flickering or dimming lights, finding outlets or switches that are abnormally warm to the touch or shrinking television pictures on the screen.
- Use only indoor lights inside your home. Outdoor lights often burn brighter and hotter than indoor lights and they could start a fire.
- Use only lights designed for the outdoors on the outside of your home. Indoor lights do not have the weatherproof protection from the elements that outdoor lights do.
- Do not use indoor extension cords outside.
- Make sure outdoor outlets have ground fault circuit interrupters to prevent electrocution from contact with snow and water.
- Do not run extension cords under rugs or furniture. They can overheat and start a fire.
- Try to use one long extension cord instead of linking several shorter cords together to minimize possible points for electricity to escape.
- Never string lights on metallic or aluminum trees.
- If you use a real tree, be sure it has plenty of water. The heat from lights, a nearby heater or a spark from faulty electrical equipment can start a disaster if a dry tree is nearby.
- When unpacking and packing lights up for the season, check strings for damage like cracks, fraying cords, loose plugs or damaged insulation. Also, keep indoor and outdoor decorations separated.
- When receiving electronic toys or appliances as gifts, make sure you carefully read and follow directions before use. Also, inspect them for any electrical damage.
- Keep indoor window lights away from curtains or anything else flammable.
- Do not string lights on roofs that are anywhere near power lines.
- When stringing lights, do not nail or staple through strings. It could damage wiring and cause dangerous electrical shocks or fires.
- Unplug lights on your tree when you are not home or when you go to bed.