

Holiday Safety

Decorating Ideas

(NAPS)—While holiday decorations are a great way to spread the joy of the season, you have to make sure they're safe.

Tips To Help

Whether you decorate indoors, outdoors or both, there are certain electrical safety tips you need to keep in mind:

- First, always purchase electrical decorations and lights from reputable retailers and make sure they've been approved by a nationally recognized testing laboratory such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL), Intertek (ETL) or Canadian Standards Association (CSA).

- Next, plan out your decoration arrangements so no outlet is overloaded and no cords are pinched by furniture or under rugs. Once you're ready to decorate, inspect all electrical decorations for cracked, frayed or exposed wiring. These can pose shock and fire hazards and should be thrown away. When hanging holiday lights, don't connect more than three strings of incandescent lights. Alternatively, consider purchasing LEDs, which use less energy and let you safely connect more strings together.

- When decorating outdoors, bear in mind that some common electrical products you use inside, such as holiday lighting or extension cords, may not be suitable for outdoor use. Check each product's labels or packaging to determine whether it's for indoor or outdoor use. Outdoor electric lights and decorations should be plugged into circuits protected by ground fault



If you use an artificial Christmas tree, choose one that is tested and labeled as fire resistant.

circuit interrupters (GFCIs), which are designed to protect from electrical shock and electrocution. If circuits are not GFCI protected, you can get portable outdoor GFCIs where electrical supplies are sold. They require no special knowledge or equipment to install.

- Once you've safely put up your decorations, continue to ensure your electrical safety by turning off all electrical items before leaving the house or going to bed. To reduce your risk, it's also important to keep Christmas trees hydrated and at least three feet from heating equipment or any open flame, such as a candle or fireplace.

Be vigilant about heeding these hints from the experts at the Electrical Safety Foundation International and give yourself the gift of safety this holiday season.

Learn More

For more electrical safety tips for the holiday season and beyond, visit www.esfi.org.