

Practice holiday electrical safety this season

The Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) is reminding those at home and in the workplace to keep electrical safety in mind when decorating for the holiday season:

- Before decorating, read and follow the manufacturers' instructions concerning installation and maintenance of all decorative electrical products.
- Use lights and other electrical decorations certified by a recognized independent testing laboratory such as CSA, UL, or ETL.
- Outdoors, use lights and other electrical decorations certified for outdoor use.
- Carefully inspect each decoration before plugging into an outlet. Cracked, frayed, loose or bare wires, as well as loose connections may cause electrical shock or start a fire. Replace damaged items.
- Always unplug electrical decorations before replacing light bulbs or fuses.
- Do not mount or support light strings that might damage the cord's insulation.
- Never nail or staple light strings or extension cords.
- Do not connect more than three light string sets together.
- Light strings with screw-in bulbs should have no more than 50 bulbs connected together.
- Do not overload extension cords – they can overheat and start a fire. Keep all outdoor extension cords and light strings clear of snow and standing water.
- Never use electric lights on a metallic tree. The tree can become charged with electricity from faulty lights.
- Do not allow children or pets to play with electrical decorations. Even small light decorations can produce a fatal shock if they are misused.
- Turn off all electrical decorations before leaving home or going to bed.
- Plug outdoor electric lights and decorations into circuits protected by ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). Portable GFCIs can be purchased wherever electrical supplies are sold.