



Holiday Light Safety

While holiday lights help make the season beautiful, they also can create fire safety hazards. Whether hung around the house or on Christmas trees, certain precautions must be taken with these decorations.

Holiday Light Fires

Line-voltage holiday or decorative lights start an average of 170 home structure fires each year, according to the National Fire Protection Association. These fires cause approximately 7 deaths, 17 injuries and \$7.9 million in property damage yearly.

Safety Tips

- Only use lights tested and rated by Underwriters Laboratories (look for the UL label).
- Follow manufacturer guidelines, including use in the proper environment (indoor vs. outdoor).
- Check lights for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, and loose connections. Discard any damaged light sets.
- Use no more than three standard size light sets per single extension cord.
- Extension cords should be placed against the wall to avoid tripping, but do not run cords under rugs.
- Be careful when hanging lights. Use insulated holders instead of tacks, staples or nails.
- Avoid hanging lights near any potential fire hazard, such as loose paper or other flammable materials.
- Turn off all lights before you go to bed or leave the house.
- Take lights down after the holidays. These lights are meant for temporary use only.

Christmas Tree Fires

Christmas trees start an average of 250 home structure fires each year, according to the National Fire Protection Association. These fires cause approximately 14 deaths, 26 injuries and \$13.8 million in property damage yearly.

Safety Tips

- When purchasing a live tree, check for fresh, green needles. Be sure needles are hard to pull from branches. Cut an additional two inches off the trunk and keep it watered at all times.
- When purchasing an artificial tree, look for a “fire-resistant” label.
- Place your tree three feet from fireplaces, radiators and space heaters.
- Never use candles to decorate a tree.