

While decorating your home for the holidays, it is natural for your main area of focus to be on how it looks. However, given the safety hazards that are inherent in holiday decorating, it is crucial that safety is a foremost concern.

Follow these basic safety guidelines to help prevent serious electrical and fire hazards as you decorate your home and yard this season:

Christmas Trees

- When purchasing a live tree, check for freshness. A fresh tree will stay green longer and be less of a fire hazard than a dry tree.
- Cut 1-2 inches from the base of the trunk immediately before placing the tree in the stand and filling with water to ensure water absorption.
- Because heated rooms dry out live trees rapidly, be sure to keep the stand filled with water by refilling daily.
- When purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label "Fire Resistant." This label indicates that the tree is more resistant to burning.
- Don't use electrical ornaments or light strings on artificial trees with metallic leaves or branch coverings.
- Place your tree at least 3 feet away from all heat sources, including fireplaces, radiators, and space heaters.
- When trimming a tree, only use non-combustible or flame-resistant materials.

Candles

- Avoid using candles when possible. Consider using battery-operated candles in place of traditional candles.
- Never leave an open flame unattended. Keep burning candles within sight.
- Place lighted candles away from combustible material such as other decorations and wrapping paper.
- Take care to place candle displays in locations where they cannot be knocked over.
- Never use lighted candles on a tree or near other greenery.
- Extinguish all candles before you go to sleep, leave the room, or leave the house.

Did You Know?

160 home fires per year begin with holiday lights and other decorative lighting, causing an average of 8 deaths, 14 injuries, and \$8.5 million in property damage (NFPA).

