

Extension Cord Safety

Planning to deck your halls with festive lights and decorations this year? Chances are, you'll end up using an extension cord to help you.

While they are a convenient way to supply power right where you need it, they can also create hazards if not used safely.

Follow this simple guidance to avoid a decorating disaster:

- Extension cords should only be used on a temporary basis.
- Make sure extension cords are properly rated for their intended use, indoor or outdoor, and meet or exceed the power needs of the appliance or device being used.
- Inspect cords for damage before use. Check for cracked or frayed sockets, loose or bare wires, and loose connections.
- Never use a cord that feels hot or is damaged in any way.
- Do not run extension cords through walls or ceilings. This may cause the cord to over-heat, creating a serious fire hazard.
- Do not nail or staple electrical cords to walls or baseboards.
- Make sure that cords are not pinched in doors, windows, or under heavy furniture, which could damage the cord's insulation.
- Keep extension cords out of high-traffic areas like doorways or walkways where they pose a tripping hazard.
- Insert plugs fully so that no part of the prongs is exposed when the extension cord is in use.
- Ensure that all extension cords are certified by a nationally recognized testing laboratory such as UL, CSA, or ETL, and read the manufacturer's instructions.

Fast Facts:

- Each year, about 4,000 injuries associated with electric extension cords are treated in hospital emergency rooms. Half of these injuries involve fractures, lacerations, contusions, or sprains from people tripping over extension cords.
- Roughly 3,300 home fires originate in extension cords each year, killing 50 people and injuring about 270 more.



Visit www.holidaysafety.org for more holiday safety resources.