



## Keep Your Holiday Decorating Safe and Energy Efficient

As the holidays approach, you may be thinking about how to decorate your home this year to make it more festive for visits from family and friends. If you are thinking about decorating with lights, there are some safety and energy efficiency tips you may want to consider.

Each year, more than 1,000 home fires begin with holiday decorations, according to the National Fire Protection Association. Take a moment to review these safety tips from DP&L before you decide which decorations to use.

### **Preparing your decorations**

Check whether your lights are for indoor or outdoor use and have been tested by a recognized testing laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratories or Electrical Testing Laboratories.

Decorations that will be near potentially hot lights should be flame resistant.

Check cords for damage, such as fraying. Discard any damaged strings of lights to avoid a fire hazard.

## **Hanging your decorations**

Hang inside lights far from space heaters, fireplaces, radiators, paper products and other potential fire hazards.

Hang outside lights in a dry environment and keep ladders at least 10 feet away from power lines. For safety, use a non-metal ladder and have someone “spot” you if possible.

Use insulated holders or plastic hooks to hang outside lights, instead of nails.

Outside lights must be approved for exterior use and ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protection is required for most outdoor electrical sockets.

Ensure your outside decorations don't block any means of access to utility equipment, including outlets and meters. Make sure your street address numbers are not hidden by decorations.

## **Using your lighted decorations**

Avoid overloading an outlet by plugging extension cords into each other. Plug no more than three miniature light strings together, and check directions on your lights for proper use.

Save time and power by using a power strip for your decorations. Then, you only have to unplug or turn off the strip instead of unplugging multiple decorations.

Only use lighted decorations when you are home and awake. It's safer and you will save power if you turn off all lighted decorations when you go to sleep or leave the house. If you are worried you will forget, use a timer.

## **Saving energy**

Consider replacing some or all of your lighting this year with light emitting diode (LED) decorative lights. They use 90% less energy, last longer and are safer because they generate less heat. Check for rebates from manufacturers for exchanging your old lighting sets.

Energy-saving gifts are thoughtful. Help someone install insulation or air seal their home. Battery chargers and CFL bulbs are gifts that will help a friend or family member reduce energy costs.

If you are entertaining, turn down your thermostat a little because holiday cooking and additional people in the house will keep things warm.