

10 Holiday Season Lights Safety Tips

1. Use only lights safety-certified by Underwriters laboratories (UL) or another recognized testing agency.
2. Before plugging in any lights – old or new – check for cracked or loose sockets and connections, exposed wires, and frayed, broken or scorched insulation. Then put the lights on a nonflammable surface and plug them in for 10 or 15 minutes to check for melting, smoking or overheating. Throw away any string of lights showing flaws.
3. Be careful not to overload electrical outlets. Never string more than three sets of lights on an extension cord.
4. Do not string lights behind drapes or under carpets.
5. Turn off the lights when leaving the house and before going to bed.
6. Never put lights on a metal tree: if they malfunction, a person could get shocked by touching any part of the tree.
7. Never use indoor lights outdoors; they aren't waterproof and could short-circuit. Always use grounded and weather-proof extension cords with outdoor lights.
8. Don't use outdoor lights indoors; they are hotter than indoor lights. If you are using a ladder, avoid contact with overhead power lines when setting up your ladder, stringing lights, or working on the roof.
9. Plug all outdoor holiday lights into a special receptacle called a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI). This receptacle is special because it provides protection from electrical shocks. A GFCI receptacle will have two buttons: “test” and “reset.” If your receptacle has these, then you have a GFCI receptacle.
10. Another option is to purchase an inexpensive extension cord set that has a built-in GFCI receptacle. First plug the GFCI cord set into the outdoor outlet and then plug your other extension cords and holiday lights in the GFCI cord set.

Courtesy of Hansen Electric.

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(909) 991-5297