

# Holiday Decorating Tips

## Safe Ways To Set Up Your Home

(NAPSA)—Heeding a few hints from the experts at the Electrical Safety Foundation International can help you have a beautiful home for the holidays and a safer and happier new year:

- If you are purchasing new decorations, shop only at reputable retailers that you trust.

- Make sure your decorations have been approved for safe use by a nationally recognized testing laboratory.

- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions that accompany your decorations.

- Carefully inspect each electrical decoration and extension cord before use; discard any damaged items. Cracked sockets, bare or frayed wires, and loose connections may cause a serious shock or fire.

- Never connect more than three strands of incandescent lights together to make a longer string.

- Consider getting LED lights, which use less power and burn cooler than traditional incandescents, allowing you to safely connect more sets.

- Avoid overloading electrical outlets, which can overheat and start a fire.

- Don't pinch cords in windows or doorways or under heavy furniture.

- Keep cords out of walkways and high-traffic areas.

- If you get a live Christmas tree, check it for freshness. A fresh tree will stay green longer and is less of a fire hazard than a dry tree.

- Heated rooms dry out even fresh trees quickly. Be sure to keep the stand filled with water.

- For artificial trees, look for a "fire-resistant" label.



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**For safety's sake, keep decorations, gifts and other combustibles at least three feet from heat sources or open flames.**

- Put the tree at least three feet away from all heat sources, including fireplaces and space heaters.

- Decorate your tree with non-combustible or flame-resistant materials.

- Avoid using candles when possible. Consider using battery-operated candles in place of traditional candles.

- When decorating outside, make sure all decorations and extension cords are marked for outdoor use.

- Always use a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI)-protected outlet outdoors.

- Exercise extreme caution when decorating near overhead power lines. Use a wooden or fiberglass ladder instead of metal. Keep yourself and your equipment at least 10 feet from power lines.

- Outdoor extension cords and lights should be kept clear of standing water and snow.

- Remember to turn off and unplug all decorations before leaving home or turning in for the night.

- Learn more at <http://holiday.safety.org> or (703) 841-3229.