

Tips to Stay Safe and Save Energy this Holiday Season from PPL Electric Utilities

As colder weather and seasonal activities increase demand for electric service, a few extra steps can help make ensure this festive season can be safe and less costly around the home. [PPL Electric Utilities](#) offers tips for bargain hunters and those who love dazzling decorations and sparkling lights for the holidays.

Statistics show incidents of home fires and electrical accidents typically increase during the winter holidays, according to the [Electrical Safety Foundation International](#). Each year, falls associated with holiday decorations send about 5,800 people to hospital emergency rooms. In addition, 3,300 house fires originate from extension cords.

PPL Electric Utilities said this checklist can be used to help you be ready for the holidays:

1. Fire safety: Test your smoke alarms and make sure your house is protected by working alarms inside each bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of your home. Keep halls, stairs and doorways properly illuminated and free of clutter and other objects that could hinder an escape during an emergency. Use nightlights in hallways and bathrooms. Make certain smoke detectors are working properly. Make sure a working fire extinguisher is on hand, and know how to operate it. Be sure everyone knows how to respond in case of an electrical accident or fire.

2. Decorating safety: Seasonal lights are beginning to appear on area homes, and the decorative lights increase the chances for electrical hazards.

- Before decorating, determine how many outlets are available and where they are located. Avoid overloading electrical outlets, which can overheat and cause a fire.
- Before use, check each light string for broken sockets, frayed cords or faulty plugs, and replace damaged strings. If you need to replace a light bulb, unplug the light string first.
- Use only lights, extension cords, animated displays and decorations rated for outdoor use.
- Don't string together more than three standard-size sets of lights to prevent overloads.
- Plug cords into outlets equipped with ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs), and use a portable GFCI if your outdoor outlets don't have them.
- Always unplug lights before going to bed or leaving your home. And never throw light strings into trees near power lines.
- Do not place extension cords where they could cause a tripping hazard, like doorways.
- Do not run extension cords under rugs or furniture.
- Keep all decorations at least three feet away from heating sources, including space heaters and fireplaces.
- Look for the label "fire resistant" when purchasing an artificial tree. It indicates the tree is more resistant to burning.
- Don't use electrical ornaments or light strings on artificial trees with metallic leaves or branch coverings.
- Avoid using candles when possible. Never leave an open flame unattended. Extinguish all candles before you go to bed, leave the room or leave the house. Keep candles out of the reach of pets and children.
- Place lighted candles away from combustible material and areas where they might be knocked over. Never use lighted candles near evergreens. Keep candles away from other decorations and wrapping paper.

3. Heating equipment safety: Space heaters are increasingly popular for supplemental heating and can be helpful to heat up a room or area when the weather gets frosty. However, space heaters cause thousands of household fires every year. Give space heaters space – keeping them at least three feet from anything that can burn, such as draperies or blankets. Keep them out of high-traffic areas and always place them on a level, solid surface. Never use extension cords or multiple plugs with a space heater to reduce the chance for electrical overloads. And never leave a space heater unattended. Be sure pets and children are kept away to avoid injury from contact. Always get your house heating system cleaned and inspected at least every two years by a licensed, professional contractor.

4. Electrical safety: Outdoor outlets should be protected with GFCIs to avoid electrical shock. Avoid

overloading electrical outlets. Check outlets regularly for problems, including overheating, loose connections and corrosion. Inspect all electrical plugs and cords. They usually deteriorate gradually, making damage difficult to detect. Make sure they are not frayed or cracked, placed under carpets or rugs, or located in high traffic areas. Do not nail or staple them to walls, floors or other objects.

5. Cooking safety. As you bring out the electric mixers, slow cookers, turkey roasters and food warmers to prepare for holiday baking and entertaining, never plug more than one high-wattage appliance into a single outlet. Match plugs with outlets. Don't force a 3-pronged plug into a 2-pronged outlet or extension cord. Unattended cooking is the leading cause of home fires in the U.S., according to the [National Fire Prevention Association](#). When cooking for holiday visitors, remember to keep an eye on what you are doing. Turn off burners if you have to leave the room. Keep towels, potholders and curtains away from hot surfaces. Watch for loose clothing that can catch fire. Move appliance cords away from hot surfaces where they can melt or burn from excess heat.

Overloaded electrical systems can be a dangerous prelude to fire. Dimming lights when an appliance goes on, slow-heating appliances, fuses blowing or circuits tripping frequently are signals of overloaded circuits. When electrical outlets or circuits become overloaded, unplug appliances from the outlet and contact an electrician if necessary. Overloaded outlets and circuits generate heat in undetectable amounts; the wear on the internal wiring system can ignite a fire.

For energy savings this holiday season and all winter long:

- With shorter days and more indoor activities, we're using more lights indoors. Replace traditional incandescent light bulbs with more energy-efficient ENERGY STAR® compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) to save on electricity costs over the lifetime of a single bulb.
- Have your heating system serviced and inspected by a certified technician; this can save money in the short-term by improving the efficiency of your heating system and save money in the long-term by preventing equipment failure. Be sure to change the filter for your heater if needed for optimal efficiency.
- Keep your house comfortable all season long with a programmable thermostat; a properly programmed thermostat can save about \$180 a year in energy costs
- Sealing leaky air ducts in your home can reduce heating (and cooling) costs by up to 20 percent. A drafty home will have greater heat loss during the coldest days of the winter.
- Adding insulation to your house prevents heat loss and is one of the most cost-effective do-it-yourself energy-saving steps you can take
- Appliances continue to use electricity even when turned off; use power strips and turn them off at night or when you travel to save energy and money.
- When purchasing appliances or electronics this holiday season, look for the ENERGY STAR® label. These models are more efficient and can reduce your energy costs. Remember, PPL Electric Utilities offers E-power rebates on certain Energy Star appliances for the home.
- When baking cookies and holiday meals, cut down on energy use by only preheating your oven for recipes that require a precise starting temperature.
- In the spirit of the coming New Year, it's out with the old and in with the new. Recycle that old refrigerator in the garage. It could be adding \$150 a year or more to your electric bill.

For information on E-power programs that can help you save even more money with these energy efficiency tips, visit

www.pplelectric.com/e-power

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