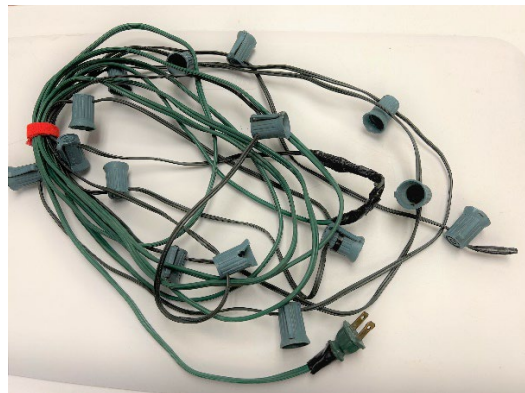




For many, the winter holidays are a time of joy, celebration and tradition. Decorating your home, yard or office is a fun, festive way to celebrate the season. A little planning can help you enjoy your display all season long. Following these safety tips from The River Forest Fire Department can help keep your family and friends safe around your decorative displays.

Planning your Holiday Display

- Plan your display according to the number and location of available outlets, and avoid overloading electrical outlets.
- Use lights that have been tested for safety – look for a certification mark from UL, CSA, ETL or other nationally-recognized laboratories. Consider using LED lights when possible – they run cooler, use less energy and last longer than incandescent lights.
- Never exceed the maximum number of strings or devices that may be linked together, as indicated on decoration packaging.
- Carefully inspect all lights and decorations for cracks, damaged sockets, homemade repairs on electric wire splices, and loose or bare wires prior to use – these defects can cause a serious fire or shock. Discard and replace damaged strands.



Decorating Safely

- When decorating the outside of your home, keep yourself, your decorations and equipment at least 10 feet from power lines. Make sure decorations are well-ventilated, protected from weather and a safe distance away from flammable items.

- Use wooden or fiberglass ladders when putting up electrical decorations and lights outside as metal ladders conduct electricity.
- Unplug electric lights, devices and decorations before installing or replacing bulbs, changing parts or attempting other repairs.
- Plug all outdoor lights and decorations into ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) to reduce the risk of electric shock. Portable GFCIs for outdoor use can be purchased where electrical supplies are sold.
- Secure lights, decorations and cords to prevent wind damage. Never staple, nail through or fasten electrical wires or extensions cords in any way that might damage the wire or insulation. This could cause electrical shock or fire.

During the Holidays

- Turn off all lights and electrical decorations before leaving your home or office, or going to bed.
- If possible, use battery-operated candles in place of traditional candles to avoid the hazards of an open flame. If you choose to light candles, place them away from flammable or combustible materials, including other decorations, fabrics, plastic or paper products.
- Do not put candles in places where they might be easily knocked over, and never leave a lit candle unattended.
- Extinguish all candles before leaving a room or going to bed.

Packing and Storage

- Inspect and discard damaged decorations prior to packing and storing them.
- New lights and decorations can be purchased at a reduced cost at the end of the season.
- Store decorations in a dry location that is out of the reach of children and pets, as well as heat sources and open flames.
- Stack boxes in a corner or other stable location, and never higher than eye level to avoid injury or damage from toppling.

