

## Holiday Lights

It's the time of year when many people decorate their house for the holidays. The use of extra lights and candles can make your home look festive, but it also can be dangerous. Every year, around the holidays, homes burn down because owners use defective lights, overload electrical outlets or leave candles burning unattended. As you get your house ready this season, keep these safety tips in mind:

- **Maintain Your Holiday Lights**  
Inspect holiday lights for frayed wires, bare spots, gaps in the insulation, broken or cracked sockets, and excessive kinking or wear before putting them up. Use only lighting listed by an approved testing laboratory.
- **Do Not Overload Electrical Outlets**  
Do not link more than three light strands, unless the directions indicate it is safe. Connect strings of lights to an extension cord before plugging the cord into the outlet. Make sure to periodically check the wires - they should not be warm to the touch.
- **Do Not Leave Holiday Lights on Unattended**

## Holiday Decorations

- **Use Only Nonflammable Decorations**  
All decorations should be nonflammable or flame-retardant and placed away from heat vents.
- **Never Put Wrapping Paper in a Fireplace**  
It can throw off dangerous sparks and produce a chemical buildup in the chimney that could cause a fire.
- **Artificial Christmas Trees**  
If you are using a metallic or artificial tree, make sure it is flame retardant.

## Candle Care

- **Using Lit Candles**  
Make sure they are in stable holders and place them where they cannot be easily knocked down. Never leave the house with candles burning. Keep them away from drapes or curtains.
- **Never Put Lit Candles on a Tree**  
Do not go near a Christmas tree with an open flame - candles, lighters or matches.

Finally, as in every season, have working smoke alarms installed on every level of your home, test them monthly and keep them clean and equipped with fresh batteries at all times. Know when and how to call for help. And remember to practice your home escape plan.

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