

# HOME MATTERS



## Decorate Safely During the Holidays

As the holiday season gets into full swing, many families decorate to spread some cheer and make their homes more festive. While holiday decorations can be fun and beautiful, they can also present fire hazards. To keep your home and family safe throughout this holiday season, consider the following decorating tips.

- Only buy electrical decorations that have an Underwriter Laboratories rating on the label, which indicates that they have been tested for safe use.
- Follow all installation and usage instructions for lighting decorations to ensure that you are not increasing your chance of starting a fire.
- Inspect new and used lights before using them and discard any that have cracks, exposed wires, or loose connections.
- Do not connect more than three sets of lights to an extension cord at one time.
- Plug outside lighting only into a ground fault circuit interrupting outlet, as this will safeguard the outlet from any interaction with water.
- Do not secure outside lights with staples or nails, and avoid placing indoor extension cords under carpeting, rugs, and furniture.
- Unplug lighting decorations before going to bed and leaving the house.
- If you set up a Christmas tree, place the tree in a sturdy stand at least 3 feet away from heat sources.
- Only keep your Christmas tree for two weeks, because it will dry out quickly and can become highly flammable.

## Be Careful With Wiring

If you blow a fuse while decorating, discard the faulty light string or decoration and replace the blown fuse. If the fuse blows again, contact an electrician to investigate the problem further. This might indicate a more serious wiring problem in your home.