



## ESFI Warns of Holiday Decorating Hazards

### For Immediate Release

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**Arlington, VA**—The winter holiday season is an exciting time of year filled with decorative displays and festive celebrations. This season, the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI), in partnership with The Home Depot, is helping consumers understand basic steps they can take to protect their families and their homes from electrical dangers during the holiday season.

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, more than 7,500 people each year are treated in hospital emergency rooms for injuries caused by electrical decorations and Christmas trees.

“Unfortunately, in the excitement of the holidays, safety is often overlooked and many people put themselves at increased risk of fire and electrocution,” said ESFI president Brett Brenner.

ESFI recommends following these important safety tips as you decorate your home and yard for the holidays:

- Carefully inspect each electrical decoration for cracked or loose sockets and frayed or bare wires that may cause a serious shock or fire hazard.
- Always unplug electrical decorations before replacing bulbs or fuses.
- Keep children and pets away from all electrical decorations and outlets. If possible, place decorations out of reach.
- Plug outdoor electrical decorations into circuits protected by ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCI) to prevent electric shock.
- Before using electrical products outside, make sure the products are marked “for outdoor use.”
- Keep all outdoor extension cords and light strings clear of snow and standing water.
- When hanging decorations, do not connect more than three light strings together.
- Avoid overloading electrical outlets and circuits, which can overheat and start a fire.
- Never use electric lights on a metallic tree, which can become charged with electricity from faulty lights.
- Use electrical decorations that are approved for safe use by a nationally-recognized testing laboratory such as UL, CSA, or ETL.
- Never nail or staple light strings or extension cords.
- Use a dry, wooden ladder when hanging lights outdoors.
- Finally, turn off all indoor and outdoor electrical decorations before leaving home or going to bed.

Visit [www.holidaysafety.org](http://www.holidaysafety.org) for more holiday safety tips.

The Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) is a 501(c) (3) organization dedicated exclusively to promoting electrical safety. ESFI proudly sponsors National Electrical Safety Month each May, and engages in public education campaigns throughout the year to prevent electrical fires, injuries, and fatalities. To learn more about ESFI and electrical safety visit [www.electrical-safety.org](http://www.electrical-safety.org).

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