

YOUR GUIDE TO ELECTRICAL SAFETY AT CHRISTMAS



THE POWER TO MAKE YOUR HOME SAFER



ELECSA

CHRISTMAS IS A TIME FOR CELEBRATION AND ONE WE ALL WANT TO ENJOY WITHOUT WORRY OR FEAR

But did you know that Christmas is also a time when fires caused by electrical issues are most likely to happen?

The use of Christmas lights, extension leads, and additional electrical products around the home, increases the risk of something going wrong at Christmas time.

However, there are a few simple and easy steps you can take to ensure your Christmas runs smoothly.

Christmas lights

Most of us light up our home at Christmas but the use of illuminated festive decorations is actually one of the most common causes of electrical fires at Christmas time.

After 12 months packed away in the loft, Christmas lights can easily become electrically unsafe.

The following safety advice should ensure your lights are safe to use this Christmas:

- Check your Christmas lights are not broken or damaged before use and look out for loose wires.
- Use only replacement bulbs (lamps) of the same type and rating as those originally supplied with the lights.
- Switch your lights off before you go to bed or go out.
- Keep lights away from flammable decorations and materials that can burn easily.
- Try to avoid using too many extension leads or adapters.
- Never attempt to repair lights by using tape or joining with another set of lights.
- Check the wiring of the plug and make sure no bare wiring is visible.



Outdoor lighting

There is now an increased use of outdoor lighting at Christmas. Using lights outdoors is of course perfectly safe so long as these simple tips are adhered to:

- Only use outdoor lights that have been specifically designed to be used outdoors. If you are unsure check the manufacturers' instructions.
- All outside sockets must be RCD protected for safety. An RCD (residual current device) works by switching off the flow of electricity when a cable or flex is cut.
- Any fixed or permanent outside lighting should be installed by a registered electrician to ensure it complies with the appropriate safety standards.





Decorations

Fire and rescue services across the country regularly issue warnings about the increased potential for house fires around Christmas time.

Dry Christmas trees, cards, decorations and candles are all potential hazards which provide a means for a fire to spread in the home.

Keep decorations and cards away from fires and other heat sources such as light fittings, sockets and charging equipment.

Call a registered electrician

It is not too late to ensure the electrical safety of your home before Christmas.

If you are in any doubt about the condition of the electrics in your home then it is always best to seek a professional opinion from a registered electrician.

You can search for a registered electrical contractor in your area by simply visiting niceic.com or elecsa.co.uk and typing in your postcode.



Did you know?

In 2011, 1,000 people were estimated to have visited A&E in the UK after home accidents involving Christmas trees and 350 people after home accidents involving Christmas lights. Source: Home Accident Surveillance System, 2012.

Fairy lights went up in smoke causing 20 fires, while Christmas trees, decorations and cards were also a fire risk and responsible for 47 house fires, leading to 20 non-fatal casualties, across the UK. Source: 2011/12 Fire Statistics Great Britain from the Department for Communities and Local Government.



Stay safe this Christmas

Recent research carried out by NICEIC and ELECSA has revealed that while 90 percent of UK residents admit to decorating their home and garden at Christmas time, less than a quarter (23 percent) would consider the additional strain this places on the electric installation in their home.

Further causes for concern include the repeated use of lights year on year that have not been properly checked. Just under a third of respondents said their Christmas lights were more than five years old while just under half did not check for the appropriate safety marks or branding on products.

To ensure you stay safe this Christmas NICEIC and ELECSA have identified the following top tips which will make sure your festive fun is danger free:

Do not overload sockets – Try to avoid extensive use of extension sockets and adapters. Do not plug multiple extensions into each other.

Do not re-wire your lights – Some people might be tempted to include two, three or sometimes four sets of lights into a single plug. This is dangerous and causes a potential fire risk.

Make sure lights you use outside are safe for external use – If in doubt always check the manufacturer's instructions.

Do not leave lights on for long periods – Never leave Christmas lights on overnight or even when you go out. All Christmas lights increase the risk of fire and overloading, and should only be switched on whilst you are at home.

Always use Christmas lights that have been certified for use – This can be identified by the European Standards Symbol (represented by a CE) and the British Standards Kitemark. If in doubt, don't use them. Always buy lights from reputable stores.

**TO FIND A REGISTERED ELECTRICIAN IN YOUR AREA
VISIT NICEIC.COM OR ELECSA.CO.UK OR CALL 0843 290 3439**