



MEDIA RELEASE

Celebrate the Holidays Safely this Season!

Ontario's Electrical Safety Authority and Guelph Hydro offer tips for safe installation of holiday lights and decorations.

MISSISSAUGA, ON/ Nov. 29, 2013 — With December just around the corner, holiday decorating is kicking off in earnest in homes across Ontario. The Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) and Guelph Hydro offer the following tips to help keep you and your family safe from electrical hazards when buying and installing holiday lighting and decorations.

When buying new electrical holiday decorations ensure products are:

- Rated and marked for where you're planning to use them. Decorations are designed and marked for either indoor or outdoor use.
- Approved for use in Ontario and bear the mark of an accredited certification agency. A complete list of acceptable certification marks in Ontario is available at <http://www.esasafe.com/electricalproducts/marks>. ESA encourages consumers to purchase decorations from reputable and well-established retail outlets.

Before you decorate:

- Replace damaged electrical products including cords, lights and decorations.
- Check the manufacturer's instructions for specific directions on how many strings can be connected together; some limit to three strings.
- Never remove the third prong from the plug of any electrical product—this is a "grounding pin" that works to prevent electric shock in the event of electrical equipment failure.
- Avoid overloading circuits with plugs and extension cords. This can create overheating that could result in a fire. Fuses that frequently blow or circuits that often trip can be a sign of overloading.
- Plug outdoor decorations into receptacles that are protected by a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI)—these are designed to cut off the flow of electricity to avoid shock hazards if the electrical system or product fails. Portable GFCIs are recommended for outdoor decorating.
- Look up! Look out! Check for overhead powerlines before using a ladder to install lights or decorations on your roof or in trees.

During the season:

- Before you turn in for bed and when you leave the house, turn off or unplug holiday lights and electrical decorations.
- Remove lights and decorations when the holidays end and store them until next year so they remain in safe working order. Freezing temperatures may cause cords to crack and holiday decorations are not designed for year-round use.

Stay safe and enjoy the festive decorations this season. For more safety tips visit esasafe.com.

Quotes:

“Every year there are incidents – some with tragic results – related to holiday electrical products and how they’re installed,” says Scott Saint, Chief Public Safety Officer, ESA. “As Ontarians get ready to enjoy the festive season with colourful lights and decorations, following these simple electrical safety tips will help keep them and their loved ones safe.”

“Two years ago there was a fatality in Guelph of someone who was putting up exterior holiday lights,” says Kazi Marouf, Chief Operating Officer of Guelph Hydro Electric Systems Inc. “This was a tragic reminder of how important it is for homeowners and businesses to be aware of the dangers associated with installing lights and other seasonal decorations on roofs, eaves troughs, and trees at this time of year.”

About the Electrical Safety Authority (ESA)

The Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) is an administrative authority acting on behalf of the Government of Ontario with specific responsibilities under the Electricity Act and the Safety and Consumer Statutes Administration Act. As part of its mandate, ESA is responsible for administering regulation in four key areas: the Ontario Electrical Safety Code; licensing of Electrical Contractors and Master Electricians; electrical distribution safety; and electrical product safety.

About Guelph Hydro Electric Systems Inc.

Guelph Hydro Electric Systems Inc. delivers a safe and reliable supply of electricity to approximately 52,000 residential, commercial and industrial customers in Guelph and Rockwood. The company is owned by Guelph Hydro Inc. which is actively developing sustainable energy projects as a key implementer of the City of Guelph’s Community Energy Initiative. For more information, visit:

www.guelphhydro.com

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