



MEDIA RELEASE

Celebrate the Holidays Safely this Season!

Ontario's Electrical Safety Authority and Utilities Kingston 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 Eastern Ontario. The Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) and Utilities Kingston 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.”

“Taking a few precautions can save you a lot of grief and keep both your property and your family safe this holiday season,” says Jim Keech, President and CEO, Utilities Kingston.

“Common electrical safety hazards may not be top of mind in the busy holiday season, but we’re encouraging everyone in our community to take some simple precautions to ensure a safe and happy holiday.”

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 Utilities Kingston

Utilities Kingston delivers cost savings and customer service advantages through utility convergence. The company is unique in Ontario, combining water, wastewater, gas and electrical services, and a broadband fibre optics provider in one company under the leadership of a single CEO.

For media inquiries:

Kara Fraser
Electrical Safety Authority
1 (800) 498-4600/ (905) 712-7819
or media.esa@electricalsafety.on.ca
www.esasafe.com

Cindie Ashton
Communications Officer for Utilities Kingston
(613) 546-4291 ext 3116/(613) 329-3462
cashton@cityofkingston.ca
www.utilitieskingston.com