



Christmas Safety

Often overlooked Hazards

For those who celebrate Christmas, now that Thanksgiving is over and the madness of black Friday has ended, it's time to get those Christmas lights up and tress decorated in the house. While these traditions provide a certain spirit to the season, there are often many overlooked hazards to be aware of. ORCIG has listed several common hazards with these traditions, and best practices to help keep you safe when performing these activities. We wish you and your family the best through the holidays and encourage you to be safe when celebrating and look out for yourself and others.

Fire Safety

◆ Christmas Trees

While a fresh Christmas tree is nice to have in the house they can dry out and become a significant fire hazard. Some best practices to consider from the ACTA regarding Christmas tree safety include disposing of trees when the needles start to fall, always placing the tree away from heat sources, using UL or ETL/ITSNA rating light strings, turning the lights off before bed (ACTA, 2016).

ORCIG also suggests that the smoke alarms in the building be tested and batteries or units be replaced as needed to ensure the alarm is functioning properly.

◆ Exterior Christmas Lights

Always follow the manufactures instructions regarding installation and how many light strings can be chained together. Drawing too much power on one circuit/plug can pose a potential fire hazard. Using different plugs around the house may help to limit this exposure by spreading the power draw over several circuits.

SafeALERT

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ORCIG 2019 SafeAlert Series



Installing Exterior Christmas Lights (Best Practices)

Exterior Christmas lights are beautiful to look at but pose several life safety hazards to install. Fall protection, safe ladder use, electrical safety, and environmental conditions are some keys to think about for a safe installation of exterior Christmas Lights. Some best practices to consider include, but may not be limited to;

- ◇ Ensuring the power to the light strings is off until they are installed.
- ◇ Limiting the amount of lights strings chained together to be no more that what the manufacture specifics.
- ◇ Use lights rated for outdoor use and plug them into a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) outlet.
- ◇ Keep the light strings off the ground and away from water sources.
- ◇ Protect the plugs and other connections from water sources such as rain, sprinklers, etc. These connections can often be placed/secured under overhangs or protected with an appropriately rated tape. The orientation of the plug can also help with keeping water out of the connection.
- ◇ Shoes with appropriate traction/tread will help to prevent slips, trips, & falls when working on ladders, roofs, and around landscapes to install lights and decor.
- ◇ Ensure the power source is off when stapling light strings into place.
- ◇ Do not install lights in adverse weather conditions.

Ladder Safety

- ◇ Use a ladder/lift that is in good condition and rated for the use (i.e. proper working load limit, non-conductive, etc.).
- ◇ Always set and secure ladders firmly per the manufacture instructions. Wire, metal stakes, or tie down straps may be a good option to secure the ladder.
- ◇ Keep ladders and self away from overhead power lines.
- ◇ When removing staples from wood, try twisting them out rather than pulling straight down. This method uses more leverage and can help to prevent falls from heights due to the sudden release from the excessive force being applied.

Driving Safety

Many people are out there shopping for the best deals and are in a hurry. Drivers are more likely to take a risk to get a parking spot, not see those crossing a street, or are distracted by their phones. Taking the time to focus on driving or getting to and from your car safely will pay dividends in getting you home to your family safely.

Remember, no gift can replace a loved one or family member. Lives can change in an instant from one fall from a ladder, house fire, or auto accident. ORCIG wants you and you families to be safe during the holidays and should you have any further questions regarding this publication, please contact your Safety Specialist for assistance.

References:

ACTA. (2016, August 19). Fire Safety Tips for Your Christmas Tree: ACTA. Retrieved December 11, 2019, from <https://>

