

Resolve to Make Safety a Priority in 2017

Now that the winter holiday season is behind us, it is time to focus on our plans and some goals for the upcoming year. The River Forest Fire Department encourages you to commit to electrical safety.

Each year too many lives are disrupted by electrical fires and too many families mourn the loss of a loved one who is fatally injured by electricity. **According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) an average of 53,000 electrical home structure fires occur each year claiming more than 450 lives.** In addition, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission reports that nearly 400 people are electrocuted by consumer products each year in the United States.

“Many electrocutions and home fires can be prevented simply by understanding basic electrical safety principles and adhering to safe practices,” said Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) president Brett Brenner. “Awareness about electrical hazards is the key.”

Start your electrical safety resolution by wrapping up your holidays with these tips:

- When you take down and put away all electric decorations: Check for frayed wires, cracked sockets, or burned out bulbs. Discard or recycle broken or faulty light sets.
- Make sure that electrical cords are in good condition. Inspect for frayed wires and cracked insulation. Do not yank or tug on cords when unplugging them.
- Separate and label indoor and outdoor decorations. Store them in a dry location that is safely out of reach of children and pets.
- Send warranty and product registration forms for new decorations to manufacturers in order to be notified about product recalls.
- Remove and properly dispose of Christmas trees. The best way to dispose of a tree is to bring it to a recycling center or contact a community pickup service.

Get ready for cold and possibly severe winter weather by taking precautions to eliminate potential hazards:

- Confirm that your home is adequately protected by smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. Test the batteries once a month to ensure that they are working properly.
- Each winter, heating is a leading cause of residential structure fires. Make sure your home heating equipment is in proper working condition throughout the winter season.

- Use space heaters properly and safely. Keep them at least 3 feet from anything that can burn and locate them out of high-traffic and doorways. Always turn space heaters off when you leave the room or go to sleep.
- Reduce the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning by keeping dryer, furnace, stove and fireplace vents clear of snow during and after snowstorms. Never use portable generators inside your home.

Visit www.electrical-safety.org and www.holidaysafety.org for more tips and tools to keep you safe all year long.

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