



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Wrapping Up the Holidays Safely

Arlington, VA – Now that the holidays are over, the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) reminds you to eliminate potential electrical hazards when packing and storing decorations so they are safe for next year's use.

According to the U.S. Fire Administration, nearly 156,000 fires in the United States occur during the winter holiday season claiming nearly 630 lives, 2,600 injuries, and \$936 million in property damage. On December 31 and January 1 alone, there are over 200 fatalities and injuries on average resulting from fire.

During the 1<sup>st</sup> week of January, ESFI encourages you to take down, inspect and store all decorations for next season. Remember, holiday decorations are meant for temporary use. Keeping decorations up for several months leaves wires unnecessarily exposed to the elements. This is much longer than intended by safety standards, shortens the products life, and causes electrical shock and fire hazards.

ESFI reminds you that as you unplug and store your holiday decorations to keep safety in mind. Following the electrical safety tips will help you stay safe as you take down your holiday decorations:

- Use the gripping area of the plug when unplugging lights and appliances. Yanking or tugging on the cord could damage the wires and insulation, possibly leading to an electrical shock or fire.
- Separate and label outdoor from indoor decorations.
- Discard broken or faulty lights.
- Store decorations away from children, pets and water.
- Send all warranty and product registration forms to manufacturers. That way, they can notify you promptly in case of a recall.
- Post-holiday sales are a great time to purchase fire extinguishers, smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.

Electricity is a powerful tool. It can also be a lethal hazard. Better safety standards have reduced electrical hazards that cause deaths, injuries and property damage. But good safety habits are still the best prevention against electrical hazards.

For more holiday electrical safety information, please visit ESFI at: [www.holidaysafety.org](http://www.holidaysafety.org).

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