



**EDISON ELECTRIC
INSTITUTE**



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Bright Ideas for Energy Efficient, Safe Holiday Lighting

Washington, DC (November 28, 2006) - If you are making a list and checking it twice this holiday season, make sure energy-efficient holiday lighting is on it. You'll enjoy all the color and joy of years past, and you'll be getting more value from your electricity dollars, too. By following some simple tips when hanging your lights, you'll also have the peace of mind that your holidays will be safe, as well as bright.

Electric holiday lighting was first switched on in a mid-town Manhattan apartment during the Christmas of 1882. Since then, the styles and choices in holiday lighting have steadily grown.

"Consumers today have a variety of energy-saving options when it comes to holiday lighting," according to Mike McGrath, EEI's Executive Director of Retail Energy Services. "For maximum energy savings, consider the new LED (light emitting diode) holiday lights. LEDs create light without using a filament, which means they produce very little heat, increasing their energy savings, safety, and longevity."

Holiday lights vary widely in their energy usage. The large, traditional bulbs (typically labeled C-7 or C-9) use about 7 watts per bulb. The popular mini-lights use about four tenths of a watt (0.4 Watt) per bulb, and the new LED lights use only four one-hundredths of a watt (0.04 Watt). To light a string of 100 traditional C-7 bulbs would cost around 7 cents per hour (using the national average electricity price of about 9.5 cents a kilowatt-hour).

A string of 100 mini-lights would cost about a half a cent per hour, and a string of 100 LED lights would cost about \$.0004 per hour. If the lights blink on-and-off, the cost in each example is cut in half. Besides the lowest operating costs, the LED lights also offer the longest operating life-up to 100,000 hours, which means you won't have to replace them for many holiday seasons to come.

Along with energy efficiency, safety is another factor to consider when using holiday lighting. Listed below are some safety tips for using both indoor and outdoor lights. Also, remember that just because your lights worked effectively last year does not mean that they shouldn't be inspected this year. A few minutes spent checking cords and plugs for potential hazards reduces the possibility of a fire. Throw away lights that have frayed wires, damaged sockets or cracked or missing insulation. And make sure that holiday lights carry the seal of approval of a recognized safety-testing laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL). Indoor-use only light strings are marked with the UL's green holographic label, and light strings for indoor and outdoor use have the UL's red holographic label.

OUTDOOR LIGHTING TIPS

- Install or adjust outdoor electrical displays only during dry weather.

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- Outdoor displays require outdoor, exterior-rated extension cords, including fixtures, cords and bulbs.
- When hanging lights around your roofline or in trees, be sure to survey the area for overhead power lines and maintain at least a 10-foot distance.
- Keep all electrical connections off the ground and hang sockets downward to prevent water from seeping into them.
- Do not use more than three sets of standard lights on each extension cord.
- Do not run electrical cords through door or window openings where they can be damaged.
- For added protection, plug outdoor lights and decorations into circuits protected by ground fault circuit interrupters.

INDOOR LIGHTING TIPS

- Do not use more than three sets of standard lights on each extension cord.
- Keep lights away from carpeting, furniture and drapes.
- Turn off decorative lights before you go to bed or leave home.
- Make sure household smoke detectors are working properly.
- Avoid running cords under rugs, through doorways, or near furniture where they may be stepped on, tripped over, or broken.
- Do not place cords around or near metal pipes, appliances, or anything that is damp or metallic. Turn off electrical devices when making adjustments.

After the holidays, a great New Year's resolution is to make your entire home more energy efficient. To help you keep that resolution, contact your electric utility or visit their Web site. Electric utilities offer energy-saving advice and programs that can include home weatherization materials and on-line energy audits, which enable you to zero in on where your home may be wasting energy, right from your own computer. For more information on electric utilities and energy efficiency, please visit Edison Electric Institute at www.eei.org.

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