

## Be Safe, Be Smart !

(Tips compiled from the California Energy Commission and Alliance to Save Energy)

- Make sure all lights you purchase contain the Underwriters Laboratories (UL) label, which means they meet UL safety requirements.
- While you're reading labels, be sure you're buying the right set--for indoor use, outdoor use, or both.
- Before installation, check for frayed wires, damaged sockets, or cracked insulation. If you find any defects, replace the entire set.
- All outdoor cords, plugs and sockets must be weatherproof. Keep electrical connections off the ground, and make sure wiring is kept clear of drainpipes and railings to prevent any risk of shock. Use a ground fault circuit interrupter on each circuit.
- Don't overload your electrical circuits. Circuits in older homes carry a maximum of 1800 watts each. Most newer homes can handle 2400 watts each. To determine how many watts you're using, multiply the number of holiday bulbs by the number of watts per bulb. (If you're not sure of the wattage, use 10 watts per bulb just to be safe!) When you're calculating the total, don't forget to include appliances, normal lighting, and other electrical equipment already running on the same circuit.
- Remember that hot bulbs can ignite dry tree branches. To avoid disaster, keep trees well watered and keep extension cords and light strings away from the water. For safety's sake, light your tree only when you are at home and awake to enjoy it. As an extra precaution, keep a fire extinguisher handy, and be sure your home's smoke detectors have new batteries and that they're working properly.
- Turn Christmas lights off during the day or when you are away or when you are asleep. Timers are a simple way to do this and also are a safety measure since lights can cause fires if not used properly. For safety's sake: Always unplug your lights before going to bed or leaving home.
- Protect little fingers: Make sure there's a bulb in each socket. If a bulb is burned out, leave it in until you have a replacement.
- To prevent electrical shock, never use electric decorations on artificial trees with metallic needles, leaves, or branches. Instead, place colored spotlights above or beside the tree-never attached to it. Make sure artificial trees are flame retardant.
- Take the lights down after the holidays! No need to light up the night until spring!

## Space Heaters

Space heaters are meant to supply supplemental heat. Keep space heaters at least 3 ft. away from any combustible materials such as bedding, clothing, draperies, furniture and rugs. Don't use in rooms where children are unsupervised and remember to turn off and unplug when not in use. Do not use space heaters with extension cords; plug directly into an outlet on a relatively unburdened circuit.

### **On space heaters:**

- Make sure space heaters are in good repair, certified by an independent testing lab such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL), Canadian Standards Association (CSA) or ITS ETL SEMKO (ITS) and the power cords are not frayed, cracked or cut.
- Plug the space heater directly into the outlet -- do not use an extension cord - and make sure the circuit can meet the demands of the space heater plus all other appliances and fixtures on the circuit.
- Follow all manufacturer instructions and cautions, and place space heaters at least three feet away from and out from under flammable material, such as curtains or draperies, loose paper, upholstery, etc., and out of reach of small children and pets. When the space heater is not in use, unplug it and safely connections are tight and protected from inclement weather, including the outlet. Unplug the lights from the outlet during daytime.