Think safety as Christmas lights help keep holidays bright.

Topeka, Kan., Nov. 20, 2017 – As Thanksgiving leftovers are packed into the refrigerator, talk of Christmas decorating starts to fill the air. Awareness can help ensure that holiday lights and decorations are installed and operated safely.

Lighting safety

Before using strands of lights or other decorations, check them for signs of damage, paying special attention to electrical cords. Signs of wear or fraying cords mean that lights may be unsafe and should be replaced.

Consider replacing incandescent bulbs with LEDs. New LED bulbs use less energy and produce less heat than their older counterparts.

Avoid overload

Don’t overload power outlets by stringing together too many strands of lights or plugging too many into a single outlet. Lighting packages may say how many strands can be safely combined. Using surge strips with built-in circuit breakers can also protect against overload.

Outdoor decoration safety

Before raising a ladder, climbing a tree or securing an inflatable, look up for nearby powerlines. If climbing onto tree limbs, make sure the extra weight will not cause limbs to contact power lines. Contact with overhead power lines can severely injure or kill someone.

Be sure that lights, decorations and extension cords used outdoors are designed for outside use, which may include exposure to wet weather. Cords with surge protectors are recommended.

Ensure that lights are fastened securely. Avoid stringing lights on metal decorations or fences that could become charged, creating the risk of electric shock.

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