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## Switch on safely this Christmas

Trees are going up and carols are filling the air, but it's remembering to stay safe this Christmas that will power you through the festive season.

EnergyAustralia has issued some electrical safety tips to help everyone decorate their homes safely this Christmas.

EnergyAustralia General Manager Network Geoff Lilliss said it was important to take a few simple safety steps when installing electrical decorations, both inside and outside the home.

"Outdoor lights add real Christmas cheer to homes but and it's a good idea to switch them off when it is raining," Mr Lilliss said.

"It is also important to make sure the lights you use are intended for outdoor use. Indoor lights are simply not designed to withstand the elements."

"When decorating your Christmas tree it's a good idea to put the lights on the tree first so you can be sure tinsel is kept away from the lights, as it can conduct electricity."

### **Safety tips for Christmas lights**

- **Check Christmas lights for signs of damage before plugging them in** – do not use your decorations if they have frayed cords or damaged plugs.
- **Keep away from overhead powerlines** – outdoor decorations should remain well away from powerlines and if you're working on your roof, stay clear of the service line.
- **Use safety switches** - they cut the power if there is a problem. If you don't have one installed in your home, use a power board with a safety switch built-in.
- **If decorating outside, only use products designed for external use**
- **Keep tinsel away from lights, power boards and sockets**
- **Do not overload power points or power boards**
- **Joins in extension cords should not be exposed to weather**
- **Fully unwind extension cords to avoid overheating**

While basic Christmas light decorations don't cost a lot of money to run, Mr Lilliss said it was important to turn them off when you leave the house or go to bed.

"The good news is that Christmas lights don't generally use a lot of power," Mr Lilliss said.

"A string of 400 fairy lights uses about 40W of power which is less than a standard lightbulb.

"If you run the fairy lights for 10 hours a night for a month and it will use about 12kWh, and add about \$1.80 to your bill.

"A standard household display has a minimal impact on a family's power bill so enjoy decorating your home safely and you can celebrate the festive season without feeling the pinch."

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