

## Safe Holiday Decorating: Keeping the Season Merry and Bright

The holiday season is a time for celebration, joy, and festive decorations—but it's also one of the most common times of year for **preventable injuries**. From falls while hanging lights to fires sparked by dry trees, holiday decorating can pose hidden dangers.

With a few safety precautions, you can keep your celebrations cheerful *and* injury-free this season.

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### Falls and Ladder Safety

**Falls from ladders** are the most common decorating injury each year. Whether you're hanging lights or placing the star on top of the tree, it's important to climb safely and use the right equipment.

**Risk:** Climbing on unstable surfaces, overreaching, or using furniture instead of a proper ladder.

#### Prevention Tips:

- Use a **sturdy ladder** on level ground.
- Have a **helper** hold the ladder steady.
- Avoid **leaning or overreaching**—move the ladder instead.
- Never climb while carrying heavy or bulky items.

#### Trip and Slip Hazards:

Tangled cords, rugs, or cluttered walkways can quickly cause accidents.

- Keep all **cords and decorations secured** and out of walkways.
  - Ensure **adequate lighting** in all areas where people will walk.
  - Remove **clutter or loose rugs** that could lead to trips or slips.
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### Fire Safety

Decorations can make your home glow with holiday spirit—but they also increase fire risk if not used safely.

#### Dry Christmas Trees

A dry tree can ignite in seconds.

- 🌲 Keep **natural trees watered daily**.
- 🌲 Place trees **away from fireplaces, radiators, and heat vents**.
- 🌲 Choose **flame-resistant artificial trees** if you prefer not to use a live one.

### Flammable Materials

Paper, tinsel, and some garlands can catch fire easily.

- 🔥 Use **flame-retardant materials** whenever possible.
- 🔥 Keep all decorations **away from candles, open flames, and heaters**.

### Lights and Outlets

Old or overloaded light strands are a leading cause of holiday fires.

- 💡 Only use **UL-approved lights** (look for the UL safety seal).
  - 💡 **Inspect cords and bulbs** for damage before plugging them in.
  - 💡 Avoid **overloading outlets or extension cords**.
  - 💡 Turn off all decorations **before going to bed or leaving home**.
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### Electrical Injury Prevention

Faulty decorations or overloaded circuits can cause electric shock or even fires.

- ⚠️ Only use decorations in **good condition**—no frayed wires or cracked sockets.
  - ⚠️ Use **outdoor-rated cords** for outdoor displays.
  - ⚠️ Avoid **plugging too many items** into one outlet.
  - ⚠️ Unplug decorations **when not in use**.
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### Choking and Cuts

Holiday decorations can be beautiful—but some can pose hidden dangers for small children and pets.

## Choking Hazards

Small ornaments, hooks, and removable parts can be dangerous.

- 🎀 Keep **small decorations out of reach** of children and pets.
- 🎀 Avoid items with **loose or detachable pieces** in play areas.

## Cuts and Scrapes

Broken ornaments and sharp edges can cause injuries.

- 💎 Hang **fragile or glass ornaments higher** on the tree.
  - 💎 **Clean up broken glass** immediately and safely.
  - 💎 Consider using **shatterproof ornaments** for extra safety.
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## 🌟 Keep the Holidays Joyful—and Safe

A few simple steps can make all the difference in preventing injuries, fires, and other hazards during the holidays.

Take the time to decorate carefully, stay alert to potential risks, and enjoy a safe, happy holiday season with family and friends.

**Happy Holidays from the American Trauma Society, Pennsylvania Division!**