

The Most Beautiful Tree

Growing up in South Dakota, my parents would spray a tumbleweed white (they get pretty big in SD) and then string lights on it. This was the "tree" the kids would decorate. We also had the more traditional one in the living room with the special and memorable ornaments. Seems sort of crazy now, but as kids we loved that tumbleweed tree. And, when I look around the stores, it's sort of crazy too. There are so many types of trees one can buy: real trees, artificial trees with lights already on them, purple trees, ceramic trees . . . hmmm, I didn't see tumbleweed in the store, though.

Yet, no matter the tree, the lights warm our winter nights and put the twinkle in our hearts. So, let's make sure your tree decorating is done safely this year. The last thing we want is to create an unsafe condition in our homes.

If you are decorating your tree, or already have it in place, take a few minutes to answer these questions and then take any necessary actions to correct your unsafe condition.

- Are your electrical decorations purchased from reputable retailers and are approved by a national recognized testing lab such as UL, Intertek, or CSA?
- Did you inspect your lights, decorations and extension cords for damage?
- Did you make sure to not connect more than three strings of incandescent lights together?
- Are you making it a habit to turn off all indoor and outdoor electrical decorations before leaving home or going to sleep?
- Have you kept your tree and other decorations at least 3 feet away from heating equipment or an open flame?
- Who have you assigned to keep the Christmas tree watered? Note – the elf-on-the-shelf won't do it.
- Are you overloading your electrical outlets? They can overheat and cause a fire.



Let's keep the warmth in your home, not from a fire, but from the joy your tree brings, whatever type of tree you have adorned, with its beautiful twinkling lights . . . and may the traditions continue.

*Prepared by Minnesota Rural Electric Association
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