

# HOLIDAY ELECTRICAL SAFETY & CHILDREN

The holiday season is a special time of year, filled with gatherings and decorations. Unfortunately, it is also a time when parents often overlook the increased dangers their young children face.

The number of children injured and killed by fires more than doubles during the winter holiday months. According to the United States Fire Administration, young children are twice as likely to die in a home fire than the rest of the population.

The Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) urges parents to keep their toddlers safe by recognizing and removing the additional shock and fire hazards that the winter months bring.

This fact sheet provides information on the steps that parents and caretakers can take to prevent electrically-related tragedies before they happen.

To learn more about the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) and holiday safety, visit [www.holidaysafety.org](http://www.holidaysafety.org).



## CHILD HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS

- Never leave a child unsupervised while cooking or when an electric or gas stove is within reach. Unattended cooking is one of the leading causes of home fires during the holidays.
- Don't use space heaters in rooms where children are unsupervised. Children may stick their fingers or other objects through the protective guards, causing burns or shock.
- To prevent both burns and electrical shocks, don't give any child under the age of ten a toy that must be plugged into an electrical outlet. Instead, buy toys that are battery-operated.
- When visiting other people's homes, remember that their homes may not be child-proofed. Upon arrival, immediately look around to make sure that there are no obvious hazards to your child.
- When buying presents for children, avoid those that could be highly flammable. Make sure all electric toys bear a fire safety label from an independent testing laboratory.
- Plan for safety. Look for potential danger spots near candles, fireplace, trees and/or electrical connections.
- Lights hung or strung across a wall or window may be low enough for a small child to grab.



- Don't allow your children to use electrical toys near water and make sure they know what water and electricity never mix. Electrical toys can become a shock hazard if they are misused.
- Keep young children away from cords altogether, since a child can choke on as little as 12 inches of cord.
- Keep liquids like drinks away from electronics, such as TVs, VCRs, and computers as they could spill and cause dangerous shocks and fires.
- Avoid putting Christmas tree lights, ornaments, metal hooks, and other small "mouth-sized" decorations near the ground or on the lower limbs of a tree where they may be easily reached by an infant or a young child.
- Replace worn or frayed electrical cords with appropriately insulated and protected cords, and keep young children away from cords altogether as they are choking hazards.

## CHILD HOLIDAY SAFETY STATISTICS

- The U.S. Fire Administration reports that the number of children injured and killed by fires more than doubles during the holiday months.
- Young children are twice as likely to die in a home fire than the rest of the population.
- The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that of the 4,000 injuries annually associated with electric extension cords, thirteen percent involve children under five years of age.
- Electrical burns to the mouth account for half the electrical injuries suffered by young children.
- More than 3,000 children under the age of 10 are treated in emergency rooms each year after inserting objects into electrical receptacles.
- According to the NFPA, although children five and under make up about 7% of the country's population, they account for 12% of the home fire deaths, assigning them a risk almost twice that of an average person.
- Electrical cords and extension cords cause almost two-thirds of electrical burn injuries to children ages 12 and under.
- According to data from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), approximately 2,400 children 10 years old or younger suffer electrical injuries each year.

The **Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI)** is dedicated exclusively to promoting electrical safety. ESFI is a 501(c)(3) organization funded by electrical manufacturers and distributors, independent testing laboratories, utilities, safety and consumer groups, and trade and labor associations. ESFI sponsors National Electrical Safety Month every May, and engages in public education campaigns and media outreach to help reduce property damage, injury and death caused by electrical accidents.

