

# How To Perform Electrical & Fire Safety Checks at Home

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In winter's cold, dark months, many forms of light are used amid the daylight-saving darkness. Whether you are adding outdoor decorative lighting or giving your living room a romantic ambience, they inspire wonder and delight in the young and the young at heart, and brighten up the mood over the winter months.

But with these cheerful lights, comes a word of caution, because lighting, whether electric or battery operated, does present a fire risk if not used or stored correctly. Figures show that instances of house fires increase over the festive period, and in many cases faulty fairy lights are responsible. So to avoid becoming another statistic, here's our guide on how to care for your lights and avoid those unintended infernos at home over winter.

## Seasonal Fire Hazards

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A house fire may, of course, happen at any time of year, but the risk is heightened over the colder months due to the simple fact that the number of risk factors increases. These include accidents in the kitchen (often after a few festive cocktails have been imbibed), more

frequent use of electric heaters and indoor fires, the use of candles and of course faulty electrical equipment, including those Christmas lights.

Nowadays, fairy lights are much safer than they used to be, with most containing LED lights that operate at a low voltage and therefore don't emit as much heat – although the transformer can become hot if it doesn't have space around it for air to circulate. Older lights, if you still have them, tend to run at 240 volts and are far more dangerous. A blown bulb can cause other bulbs to become hot due to the extra voltage, which presents a fire risk, especially considering they are often burning close to flammable decorations or tree foliage.

## Lighting Fire Safety

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As with any appliance, being a fire risk doesn't mean you have to ditch the lights altogether. If you take a few precautions there's no reason you can't turn your living room or front garden into a magical grotto for a few weeks every year. Do's and don'ts include:

- DO check that the socket and cables are in good condition and not damaged every year when you get your lights out.
- DO identify and replace any blown bulbs. If you can't find the faulty bulb, don't have a replacement or they keep blowing out, it's time for an upgrade. Dispose of them with your small electricals and invest in some newer LED lights.
- DON'T overload your sockets – one plug per socket is best – and don't string multiple extension cables together.
- DON'T allow the cables to become trip hazards – especially if you have candles burning.
- DO turn off the lights and blow out any candles when you leave the house or go to bed.
- DO perform these home electrical safety checks with all your powered decorations, whether electrical or battery-operated.

## How to Manage Your Electrical Furniture

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As with appliances, electrical furniture can present a fire risk if not cared for correctly, and you should take the same precautions with items like adjustable beds and electric recliner chairs as you do with your stoves, kettles and lights. Mechanisms and remote controls should be clean, dry and free of debris, cables kept clear of walkways and checked regularly for damage, and they should never be used with hot water bottles.

One of the best ways to ensure your electrical furniture is as fire safe as possible is to purchase it from a reputable manufacturer, such as the Mobility Furniture Company. All of our electrical products come with a five-year guarantee and meet all UK and European safety standards, including the use of fire-retardant fabrics. For even more peace of mind, you could decide on a heated recliner chair, which is not only a highly efficient way of

keeping warm but eliminates the need for dangerous electric heaters and open fires. And our rise and recline chairs and settees, adjustable beds and electric sofa beds are installed by qualified technicians.

## Fire Safety Over Winter Months

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Of course, you should always make sure you've done everything you can to prevent fires at home no matter what time of year it is. Fortunately, plenty of information is available online, and for many people, there is no electrical safety check cost if you apply through your local council. But at this time of year, it doesn't hurt to take a few extra precautions, such as:

- Be extra careful in the kitchen, as that's where many fires start. Don't attempt to cook after you've had a few drinks, and don't try and do so much that you overload your appliances. Don't leave hot pots and pans unattended, and make sure everything is switched off and cooled down before you go out or to bed.
- Don't hang decorations or damp clothes on lights or heaters, and don't place heaters near flammable materials such as curtains or cushions.
- Never leave candles or open fires unattended, or near open windows or other air currents.
- Make sure your smoke detectors are working and that there's one on each floor. You could consider using a heat alarm for the kitchen, which is sensitive to rises in temperature rather than smoke or steam. Knowing where to put a carbon monoxide detector can also help protect you from faulty heaters and gas appliances.
- As your electric appliances will likely be getting more use than usual at this time of year, make sure they are all in working order by performing basic safety checks.
- Stay warm safely. Give your heaters and radiators a good clean, and check all your electric heat devices for broken or faulty plugs and cables. Be extra careful holding drinks and liquids around electric blankets and furniture, and never combine them with hot water bottles.
- If you or your guests smoke, make sure your cigarette is always properly extinguished, and never smoke in bed.
- Keep a small fire extinguisher and fire blanket in your home, and don't neglect your usual pre-bedtime home fire safety check.

## The Bottom Line

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There may be more fire hazards in your home around winter, but that doesn't mean you have to have an increased risk – or go without the wonder of those magical decorative lights. Simply reduce risk by taking care of your products, placing decorations appropriately, and do not leave fires, candles and cooking unattended.

And once you're ready to put your feet up, you can relax in your very own [rise and recline chair](#) from the Mobility Furniture Company, or curl up with your loved ones on a perfectly tailored [recliner sofa](#) to watch your favourite movies. You can rest easy knowing that you've done everything in your power to keep your family safe from fires. Now that's a thought to warm the heart!



Andy has worked for 12 years in the Mobility Furniture field providing custom made furniture for clients to meet their medical and physical needs.

[Andy Cox](#)

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