

Stay "extra cautious" and avoid danger this Christmas, says Rochdale electrical expert

Friday 13 December, 2013

Lancashire based [Downlights Direct](#) director Chris Horridge is urging people to stay alert to electrical hazards around the home this holiday season.

According to the NHS, UK residents are 50 per cent more likely to die in a house fire over Christmas than at any other time of the year.

In 2002, 350 people visited A&E after accidents involving Christmas lights, according to RoSPA, and fairy lights caused 20 fires across the UK in 2011.

"Christmas can put a heavy strain on the home and we are urging people to be extra cautious this holiday season to avoid accidents," Horridge said.

"For instance, if your fairy lights are over five years old then you should consider updating them."

He said modern fairy lights have been transformed down to 12 or 24 volts and have to pass stringent new safety checks for added security.

Inappropriate storage of fairy lights was a safety concern, Horridge said, particularly when lights have been stored in damp or hot conditions.

"LED fairy lights are safer because they don't heat up in the same way filament bulbs do," Horridge said.

"Putting hot lights on a dry tree is a huge health and safety risk, particularly when the tree is surrounded by other hazards like decorations and wrapping paper."

Horridge said further lighting risks included trailing cables, overloading plug sockets and plugging one extension socket into another.

"If you are using fairy lights, always turn them off when you are not in the room and never leave them on for long periods of time," he said.

"Never attach fairy lights to the outside of your home unless the lights have been approved for outdoor use.

"It may seem like common sense but taking these precautions could save somebody's life."

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