

HOLIDAY LIGHTING:  
BRIGHT IDEAS TO SAVE  
MONEY AND POWER



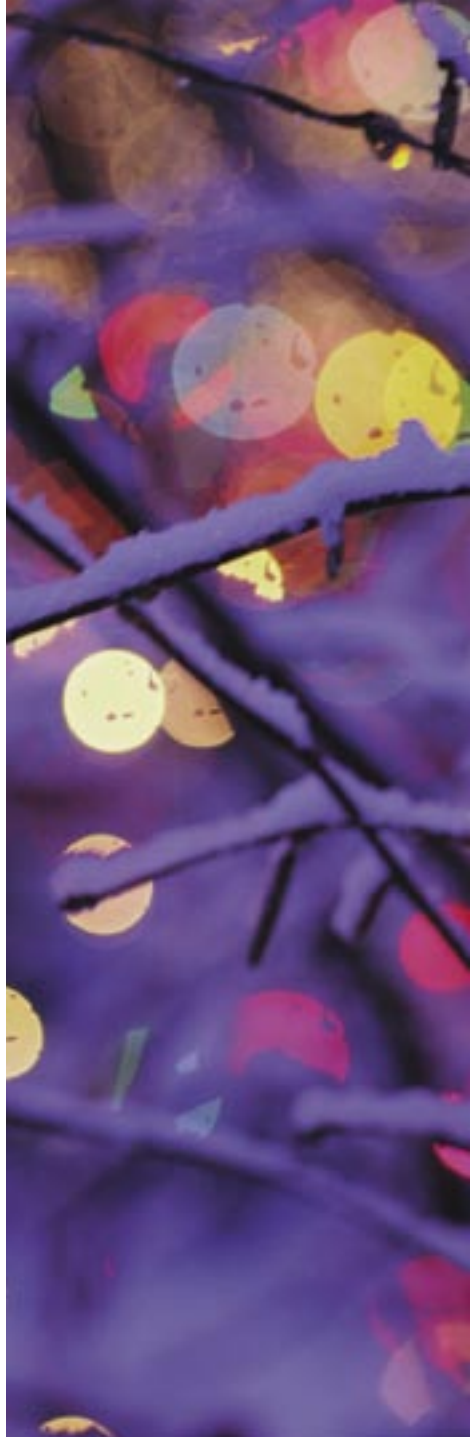
## HOLIDAY LIGHTING - BRIGHT IDEAS TO SAVE MONEY AND POWER

Hanging holiday lights is a popular season ritual for many. They are an easy way to decorate your home and yard and quickly put you in a festive mood.

Many people equate higher seasonal power bills with the use of holiday lights. In reality, most often lifestyle changes, such as, increased use of appliances, block heaters and furnaces are responsible for increased power consumption during the holidays. Here are a few tips to save you money and power and to ensure your holiday is safe and enjoyable!

### LIGHTING YOUR HOME AND YARD

After deciding how you would like to decorate your home and yard, you will need to decide the type or size of bulbs, colour and number of bulbs required.



## 5-WATT, 7-WATT, MINILIGHTS OR LED LIGHTS?

The bulbs on strings of large holiday lights are either 5- or 7-watts each. Whenever possible, choose the more efficient 5-watt bulb strings and replace burnt out 7-watt bulbs with 5-watt replacements.

Mini-lights are some of the most efficient type of holiday lighting. Use these lights to decorate your indoor Christmas tree or small trees or shrubs in the yard. They can be especially attractive when used to decorate bare deciduous trees.

The newest form of holiday lighting on the market is the LED light. LED (light emitting diode) lights are constructed from solid-state chips that convert electricity into light without the use of a filament or a glass bulb. Without a filament, there is nothing to burn out. LED's are very energy efficient and last a long time. Use LED's wherever you'd use the 5- or 7-watt lights. LED's are however, more expensive to purchase than traditional holiday lighting.

## OUTDOOR SPOTLIGHTS AND FLOODLIGHTS

Spotlights or floodlights can also be used to light your home or trees. Lighting a tree using floodlights from two or three different directions add dimension while a spotlight highlights a tree. Coloured

floodlights and spotlights give your lighting display a festive touch.

Floodlights are available in both standard incandescent and halogen bulbs. Halogen floodlights however provide a more intense light and are more energy efficient than an incandescent light. Replace a 150-watt incandescent floodlight with a 90-watt halogen floodlight. This will save energy while still providing the same amount of light.

Outdoor floodlights or spotlights are made to withstand rain or snow and are equipped with a bulb holder, ground or snow spike, swivel joint, outdoor cord and plug.



## COLOUR

Choose bulbs with transparent rather than painted colouring. These lights look brighter and will not peel or chip. When choosing the colour of your light display think about which colours appear brighter. Gold is the brightest followed by red, green and finally blue lights. Experiment with one or several colours until you are satisfied with the effect.

## HOW MANY DO I NEED?

Have you ever looked at the huge maze of light strings at your feet only to put them up and have only half a tree decorated? It is difficult to visually estimate how many lights are required to adequately decorate a tree. Use this easy formula to calculate the number of lights you will need.

### How many lights?

To calculate the number of bulbs required on your tree:

height (feet) x width (feet) x 3

If using mini-lights

height (feet) x width (feet) x 6



## ADDING SOME PIZZAZZ

Liven up a light display by using the twinkle light that comes with a set of mini-lights. This bulb turns the whole set on and off when it is used to replace one of the lights. A metallic strip inside the bulb switches the lights on and off.

Similar mechanisms turn lights on and off in a pattern or in time to popular Christmas carols.

## LIGHTING ACCESSORIES

A variety of accessories can make turning lights on and off every night easier and energy efficient.

Outdoor timers can be programmed to turn the outside lights on and off each evening. This allows you to stay in the comfort of your warm home and still enjoy the lights. Timers, however, should not be used to turn indoor lights on.

Instead, consider a sound activated switch to turn your lights on and off. Available from electrical or hardware outlets, this control allows you to operate with the clap of your hands indoor lights or appliances less than 360 watts.

This will save you from having to crawl under the tree to reach that plug.

## HOLIDAY SAFETY

There are a few safety tips to keep in mind when decorating with holiday lights. Always use outdoor lights outdoors. Indoor floodlights should not be used in outdoor displays. Strings and replacement light bulbs will be labeled with their recommended use.

Do not put timers on indoor holiday lights. The lights on the tree could come on while no one is home. This could be a fire hazard. Dry pine needles can ignite if touched by a hot bulb. Always turn your indoor lights off when you turn in for the evening.

Each outlet can only accommodate up to 1500-watts. Add up the wattage of the bulbs on the string, they should not exceed 1500-watts. Also check manufacturer recommendations when joining strings together. Three strands is usually the maximum allowed. If the plug is hot, the circuit may be overloaded or there is a short in the cord.

Outdoor lights should be hung with the bulb hanging down. This prevents moisture from collecting in the sockets and causing damage. Only insulated staples or plastic hooks should be used to hang the lights. Nails and tacks should not be used as they could damage the cord.

Outdoor lights are not designed to be left up all year round. Cords weaken and bulbs will deteriorate shortening the life of the lights.

Inspect strings before you decorate. Look for any frayed cords or breaks in the insulation. These lights are a fire hazard and should not be used.

When mini-lights burn out, replace them immediately. Check to make sure the voltage of the replacement light is the same as the original as they can vary depending on the number of lights on the string. Remember to unplug the string before replacing a burnt out bulb.

If possible, plug outdoor holiday lights into a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI). A GFCI replaces the wall receptacle and is installed on the outside of homes built after 1975. A GFCI trips the electrical circuit if a ground fault occurs. A ground fault results when electricity travels outside its intended path due to faulty appliances or frayed cords. Electricity tries to get back to its source through the ground. If the circuit breaker trips after plugging in your holiday lights, check the cord for damage.

Check to ensure both light strings and replacement light bulbs are CSA approved.



## MAKE IT AN ENERGY EFFICIENT HOLIDAY SEASON

Remember these tips when decorating during the holidays.

When choosing lights, choose mini-lights if possible. They are the most energy efficient option. Use the more efficient 5-watt bulbs rather than 7-watt bulbs when buying replacement bulbs for standard strings.

Use an outdoor timer to turn outdoor lights on and off at preset times. You'll never forget to turn the lights off and you'll stay warm on those frosty nights!

## LIGHTING COSTS

Have you ever wondered what it costs to light your home for the holiday season? Here are monthly costs based on an electricity rate of 6¢ per kW.h.\*

## INDOOR LIGHTING

Tree size	Number of lights	Hours of operation	Monthly cost*
3 ft. tree	2 strings of mini-lights (50 lights per string)	4 hours per day	\$0.25
	3 strings of 5-watt lights (15 lights per string)	4 hours per day	\$1.60
	3 strings of 7-watt lights (15 lights per string)	4 hours per day	\$2.30
A 6 ft. tree will require double the number of lights and will double the monthly cost.			

## OUTDOOR LIGHTING

Display size	Number of lights	Hours of operation	Monthly cost*
15 ft. tree	12 strings of mini-lights (25 lights per string)	4 hours per day	\$1.50
15 ft. tree	6 strings of 5-watt outdoor lights (25 lights per string)	4 hours per day	\$5.40
outline house	3 strings of 5-watt outdoor lights (25 lights per string)	4 hours per day	\$2.70
	3 strings of LED outdoor lights (70 lights per string, 4 watts per string)	4 hours per day	\$0.04
floodlights	2 floodlights using 90-watt bulbs	4 hours per day	\$1.30

\* Uses an electricity price of 6¢ per kilowatt hour ( ). Actual electricity prices may vary.



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## LIGHTING GUIDES ALSO AVAILABLE:

- Energy efficient recessed and track lighting
- Timers and sensors
- Lighting with compact fluorescents
- Fluorescent lighting in your home

For more information contact us at:  
10065 Jasper Ave, Edmonton AB T5J 3B1  
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Rev. 2005-09