

5 LEADING CAUSES OF WINTER ELECTRICAL FIRES

Winter is quickly approaching, and with it comes the holidays and the heightened possibility of an accidental electrical fire. Winter fires are also known to be more severe than the average fire during the rest of year. Understand the various causes that can lead to a dangerous electrical fire this winter to help mitigate the potential risks.



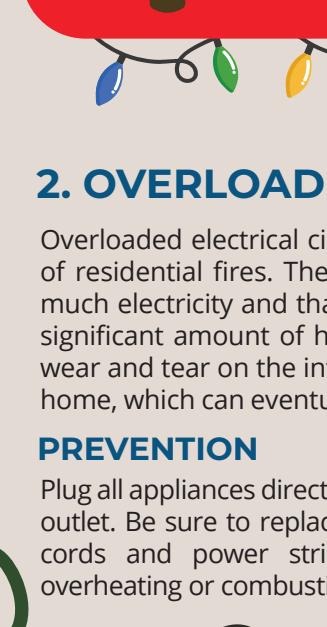
During the winter months, structure fires caused by a heating appliance increases

FROM 17% TO 27%
CAUSING OVER 47,700 HOUSE FIRES EACH YEAR



LEADING CAUSES

1. HOLIDAY DECORATIONS



AN ESTIMATED 76% AMERICANS

decorate their homes during the holidays.

MORE THAN 20%

will not turn off their holiday electrical decorations and lights before leaving the house or going to sleep each night.



REPLACE EVERY

3-5 YEARS



Holiday trees and lights are the most common culprits to initially catch fire. Inspect all holiday lights thoroughly to ensure they are working properly.

- 3 ft set your tree up at least three feet away from any heat sources
- H₂O keep it well-hydrated throughout the holiday season
- never leave the lights on unattended for any period of time.

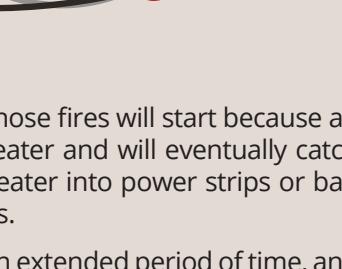
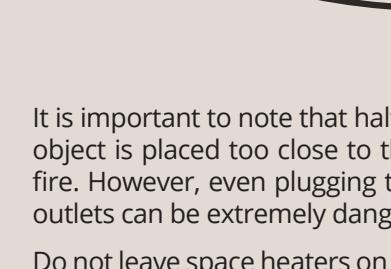
2. OVERLOADED OUTLETS

Overloaded electrical circuits are a major cause of residential fires. These outlets will carry too much electricity and that in turn will generate a significant amount of heat. The heat will cause wear and tear on the internal wiring system in a home, which can eventually lead to a fire.

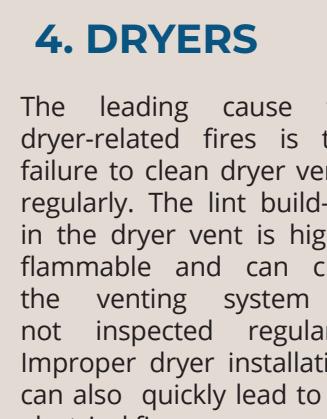
PREVENTION

Plug all appliances directly into the wall receptacle outlet. Be sure to replace worn or old extension cords and power strips to avoid accidental overheating or combustion.

ONLY PLUG IN 1 HEAT PRODUCING APPLIANCE INTO AN OUTLET AT A TIME



3. SPACE HEATERS



RESPONSIBLE FOR 79% DEADLY HOME FIRES

- H₂O Never use space heaters in wet areas such as the bathroom or kitchen.
- <3 ft Clear all materials away from space heaters in use by at least three feet.

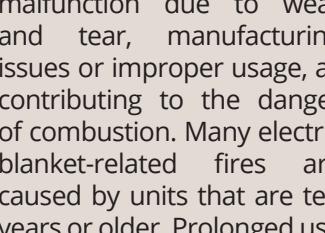
It is important to note that half of those fires will start because an object is placed too close to the heater and will eventually catch fire. However, even plugging the heater into power strips or bad outlets can be extremely dangerous.

Do not leave space heaters on for an extended period of time, and never leave them unattended.

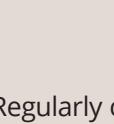
4. DRYERS

The leading cause for dryer-related fires is the failure to clean dryer vents regularly. The lint build-up in the dryer vent is highly flammable and can clog the venting system if not inspected regularly. Improper dryer installation can also quickly lead to an electrical fire.

PERFORM MAINTENANCE EACH YEAR



CLEAN



Clean the lint filter after every use and inspect and clean the venting system and ducts every few months to ensure they are lint-free.



5. ELECTRIC BLANKETS



Electric blankets can malfunction due to wear and tear, manufacturing issues or improper usage, all contributing to the danger of combustion. Many electric blanket-related fires are caused by units that are ten years or older. Prolonged use can also lead to flammable accidents.

Regularly check and throw out old or worn electric blankets and heating pads.

UNPLUG UNIT



WHENEVER IT'S NOT IN USE

READ INSTRUCTION MANUAL



Be sure to read the instruction manual and adhere to all rules for the product, including maximum time of use.

Sources: U.S. Fire Administration, American Redcross, Insurance.com, Electrical Safety Foundation International, Family Handyman, Harrington Group, National Ag Safety Database, Electrical Safety Foundation, Reader's Digest, Building Performance Institute, Warshauer-McLaughlin Group