

Holiday Decorations: Keep Power and Exits Safe

Todd Jerome Jenkins | v1.0 | Reviewed October 6, 2026 | Discussion + field checks

Why this matters

Decorations change a familiar room. Added lights can change an electrical load, and displays can narrow an exit or hide a cord. Check the finished setup and repeat the check when someone adds or moves an item.

Objective: Verify suitable electrical decorations, safe placement and usable escape routes.

Key hazards or failure points

Damaged light sets; wrong indoor/outdoor rating; too many connected products; unsafe installation access; cords across walkways; combustibles near heat; blocked doors or exits.

Practical controls

- Use products suitable for the actual location and follow their labels and connection limits. Inspect before energizing. Keep damaged, unidentified or unsuitable items disconnected and use qualified help for electrical problems.
- Plan installation with suitable access equipment and approved attachment methods. Do not climb furniture or improvise electrical repairs. Choose flameless decorations where practical and follow applicable fire guidance.
- Keep routes, exits and required protection accessible. Position decorations using the site fire plan, local requirements and product instructions. Assign a person to recheck changes and complete required shutdown arrangements.

Verify It in the Field

With the product unplugged, read the actual rating and allowed connections and inspect wiring, plugs and condition. Compare the proposed combination with its instructions. Do not assume every light strand has the same connection limit.

Walk the route with decorations in place. Check that required doors and openings remain usable without altering fire-door function. Move obstructions and resolve unclear clearance requirements with the responsible person.

Check placement against actual heat/ignition separation criteria and the approved power arrangement. Record the source and finding. Confirm who checks the area after changes and before leaving; adding one more item requires another look.

Stop and reassess

Disconnect safely and hold use for damage, unusual heat, smoke, repeated tripping or an electrical smell. Use emergency arrangements for immediate danger. Correct blocked access and reassess moved decorations or added strands and appliances before continuing use.

Ask the crew

1. Where is the actual connection limit for this product?
2. Can people still use the exit when the area is crowded?
3. Who checks changes and the end-of-day arrangement?

Before energizing: check the product, placement and way out.

Sources: USFA holiday fire/escape guidance; OSHA 1910.37 where applicable.

Free next step: [JHA/JSA planning & field-verification worksheet](#)

Expanded guidance, references, supervisor check and attendance record accompany this talk.