



Saving energy for Maine

Program of the Maine Public Utilities Commission

State Fire Marshall and Efficiency Maine Offer Lighting Safety Tips

AUGUSTA, ME, December 18, 2006 -- The State Fire Marshall's Office and Efficiency Maine, a program of the Maine Public Utilities Commission, have teamed up to offer lighting safety advice this holiday season. Christmas lights cause about 300 tree related fires across the country each year. Sixteen percent of the fires are from electrical malfunctions, outlet overload and frayed wires. Tree fires are especially dangerous because they tend to grow large very quickly.

The good news is that holiday fire incidents have been declining steadily for 25 years. New holiday LED lights are another step on the road to improved safety.

"LED lights are a great option for consumers who want to enjoy the holiday season and be as safe as possible," stated John C. Dean, Maine State Fire Marshall. "In the last three decades we've come a long way toward improving fire safety at the holidays, and it's products like these that will keep us moving in that direction."

Some of the safety advantages of LED lights over traditional holiday lights are:

- LED bulbs produce very little heat and remain cool to the touch regardless of how long they are lit. They are made of solid-state chips so there is no filament to 'burn out' or combust.
- Sturdy bulbs - the epoxy lenses of LED lights are virtually indestructible.
- Energy efficiency - LED bulbs consume a fraction of the electricity

Other holiday lighting safety tips:

1. Replace incandescent holiday lights that are more than three years old or have been used outside.
2. Replace incandescent holiday lights that have worn light fixtures or sockets.
3. Purchase lights that have a UL rating, which means they have been tested in a registered laboratory (UL stands for Underwriters Laboratories - a private research firm that classifies and determines the safety of various materials and products).
4. Don't use nails or staples to hang holiday lights on your tree.
5. Unplug holiday lights when leaving the house or going to bed.
6. Use lights labeled as "outdoor" for decorating outside, and "indoor" for inside the home.

Many local retailers are offering instant cash rebates on LED lights through Efficiency Maine until December 24th. For a list of participating retailers, call 1-888-376-2463 or visit the website at www.energymaine.com.

Administered by the Maine Public Utilities Commission, Efficiency Maine is a statewide effort to promote the more efficient use of electricity; help Maine residents and businesses use reduce electricity costs, and improve Maine's environment.