

Your Energy Connection



November 2014

Top 10 Holiday Safety Tips

This season, as you make your lists and check them twice, remember to add safety to your holiday planning. Rocky Mount Public Utilities (RMPU) recommends using the following safety guidelines to keep you and your family safe.



Inspect electrical decorations for damage before use.

Cracked or damaged sockets, loose or bare wires, and loose connections may cause a serious shock or start a fire.



Do not overload electrical outlets.

Avoid overloading electrical outlets with too many decorations or electrical devices. They can overheat and cause a fire. Plug only one high-wattage appliance into each outlet at a time.



Never connect more than three strings of incandescent lights together.

Connecting more than three strands could blow a fuse or start a fire. Consider using LED lights, which use less energy and run cooler than incandescent lights.



Keep the Christmas tree fresh by watering daily.

Before placing the tree in the stand, cut 1-2 inches from the base of the trunk to ensure water absorption.



Use battery-operated candles.

Candles start almost half of home decoration fires according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).



Keep combustibles at least three feet from heat sources.

Being too close to a heat source is a factor in half of home fires that begin with decorations.



Protect cords from damage.

Cords should never be pinched by furniture, forced into small spaces (e.g. doors or windows), placed under rugs, located near heat sources, or attached by nails or staples.



Check decorations for certification labels.

Decorations not bearing a label from an independent testing laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL), Canadian Standards Association (CSA), or Intertek (ETL), have not been tested for safety and could be hazardous.



Stay in the kitchen when something is cooking.

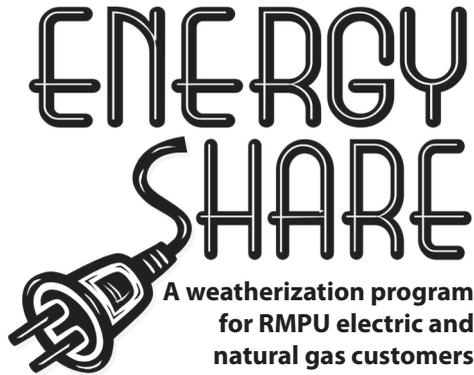
Unattended cooking equipment is the leading cause of home fires.



Turn off, unplug, and extinguish all decorations when going to sleep or leaving the house.

Unattended candles are the cause of one in five home candle fires. Half of home fire deaths occur between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m., according to the NFPA.

The "Top 10 Holiday Safety Tips" information was obtained from the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFi). For more electrical and holiday safety information, visit www.esfi.org.



Customers can receive a cash rebate of up to \$500 for work related to attic weatherization and/or up to \$500 for a replacement HVAC system.

Any RMPU electric and/or natural gas customers may apply, including homeowners and renters. There are no income regulations with this program, but funds are limited.

For information or to apply, call (252) 972-1102.

Winter Assistance for Rocky Mount (W.A.R.M.) Program

The W.A.R.M. Program assists low income elderly, disabled or recently laid off customers with paying past due heating expenses. W.A.R.M. is supported solely on donations from the community.

Donations are tax deductible and 100% of all contributions are used to help those in need.

There are three ways to donate:

- Make a lump sum donation
- Complete and return the enrollment form in your monthly utility bill
- Round up your monthly bill to the nearest \$1

For more information about the W.A.R.M. Program, call (252) 972-1250 or visit www.rockymountnc.gov/warm.html.

Load Management Program

RMPU electric customers can earn up to \$129 per year in credits on their utility bill by having load management switches installed on one or more appliances:

- Electric Water Heater: \$2.00 credit per month
- Electric Heat Strips: \$15.00 credit per month during three months of winter
- Central Air Conditioner: \$20.00 credit per month during three months of summer

There is no fee for the switches or installation.

Enroll today by calling (252) 467-4803 or visiting www.rockymountnc.gov/utilities/loadmanagement.html.



Holiday Lighting Energy Calculator

Use the online tool to compare the energy costs of LED vs. Incandescent lights. To use the calculator, visit the RMPU website at www.rockymountnc.gov/utilities/holidaylighting.html.



Save energy while you are away!

Whether you're planning to head south for the winter or it's to grandmother's house you go, your house could still consume energy while you are away. Add these simple tips to your holiday planning checklist to ensure the most energy savings this season.

- Turn off the electric water heater at the breaker box or set the gas water heater to "pilot." *When you return, allow a few hours for the water to heat up.*
- Use photocells or timers for lights. Photocells turn the lights on at dusk and off at dawn. Timers turn the lights on and off at predetermined times.
- Unplug waterbed heaters or lower the thermostat to 70°F. *Like water heaters, waterbeds also will need time to warm up once you return.*
- The refrigerator is typically the largest user of energy in an unoccupied home, but it is not usually practical to unload, defrost and unplug it. If you leave the refrigerator on, remove perishable food, set it to a warmer temperature and fill it with gallon jugs of water (to occupy the space so the condenser will not run). This will reduce temperature fluctuations and save energy.
- During the winter, lower the home's thermostat to 50°F. At settings lower than 50°F you run the risk of frozen pipes.
- The best way to ensure appliances are not drawing power is to unplug them or turn power off at the breaker.

