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A Brighter Tree With Safe Lights

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A Brighter Tree With Safe Lights

by Betty Fox

IT'S GOING to be a wonderful Christmas this year, and let's be sure it's a safe one. When Dad or brother brings the trimmings for your Christmas tree out of storage, dive for the box with the Christmas tree cords and make a thorough inspection.

With a pair of scissors, a screwdriver, and a roll of sturdy construction tape, you're ready to begin, and here's how:

Check every inch of the cord for worn or damaged spots. If you find the cord is wearing near the wall plug, reinforce it with a few strips of tape, or remove the entire plug and re-thread it with a newly trimmed end. Dad may have to help you with the last step, unless you've already had a course in household equipment or some previous experience.



Now that everything is ready, it's time to string the lamps on your tree. If your cords do not have adjustable wooden balls to secure the lamps, fasten them with a small strip of construction tape around the wire under the branch.

Check the sockets and notice if any are seriously cracked and if they are well attached. Repairs on sockets are dangerous, so it's best to discard a wire that's pretty well worn out. On the series type of set, where all the lights go out when one does, a socket cannot be safely removed since this will raise the voltage for the remaining sockets, and so increase the current and the heating effect. With parallel

lines, a damaged socket may be removed and the wires securely taped to complete the circuit.

If you are using extension cords, give them the same inspection you gave the lighting cords. See that they are long enough and are not placed on floors or under rugs where they may be walked on or fallen over. Do not attach too many cords to any one convenience outlet.

When your cords are all inspected, find the light bulbs, screw 'em in, and hope they all light. Bulbs for parallel lighting, where one socket operates independent of the others, should not be interchanged with those for series cords. They may be distinguished since the series bulbs usually have a smaller base.

The neck of the bulb should fit deep into the socket so no exposed parts are present to conduct electricity.

While you are working, maybe Dad will see the trunk of the tree diagonally 1 inch above the original cut and put the tree in a holder with water. A fresh tree is, of course, less of a fire hazard and will shed fewer needles than one which has been cut and stored for several months.

Various-colored Lights

The most recently developed set of Christmas tree lights allows you to place the lights on the cord exactly where you want them. You get a plastic cord with plug at one end and socket at the other—approved by Underwriter's Laboratory. You also get eight separate various-colored lights and molded base sockets with built-in clips that attach to the tree. When trimming your tree, you simply drape the

cord around it and plug it in to any 110 volt line. Then you take a light, unscrew the base of it, place it over the cord at the place you want it, then screw the base back on, and repeat the process with the rest of the lights.

After lights come ornaments, then finally, a little tinsel. Remember not to hang ornaments or tinsel on the electric wires for this will cause unnecessary wear and possibly a short circuit.

When buying new strings, insist on good quality sets this year. Look for the Underwriters Laboratory seal. This may be stamped on the box, on small yellow tapes around the cord or on a round tag by the outlet plug. You'll be able to recognize the "UL" easily; it stands for good quality equipment that has passed rigid safety tests in the Underwriters Laboratories.

New Lighting Sets

The new lighting sets on the market are greatly improved over pre-war types. Non-conductable plastic or synthetic material is closely bonded to the wire instead of the old-style insulation. This new type is not easily pulled away from the socket end of the wire, and it will wear longer. Small round washers for insulation are being placed around the neck of the bulb to prevent contact between the live metal shell and Christmas tree trimmings.

When Christmas is over and the time for taking the tree down arrives, pack the cords as carefully as you do the ornaments. Remove the bulbs, coil the individual wires and tie loosely. Wrap each in paper, pack them in a box and label them for next Christmas.



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