

# Tripped circuit breakers deserve attention!

## A little electrical safety could prevent a winter house fire

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It's bound to happen this winter...some family, maybe one you know, will lose their home and most of their belongings to a fire.

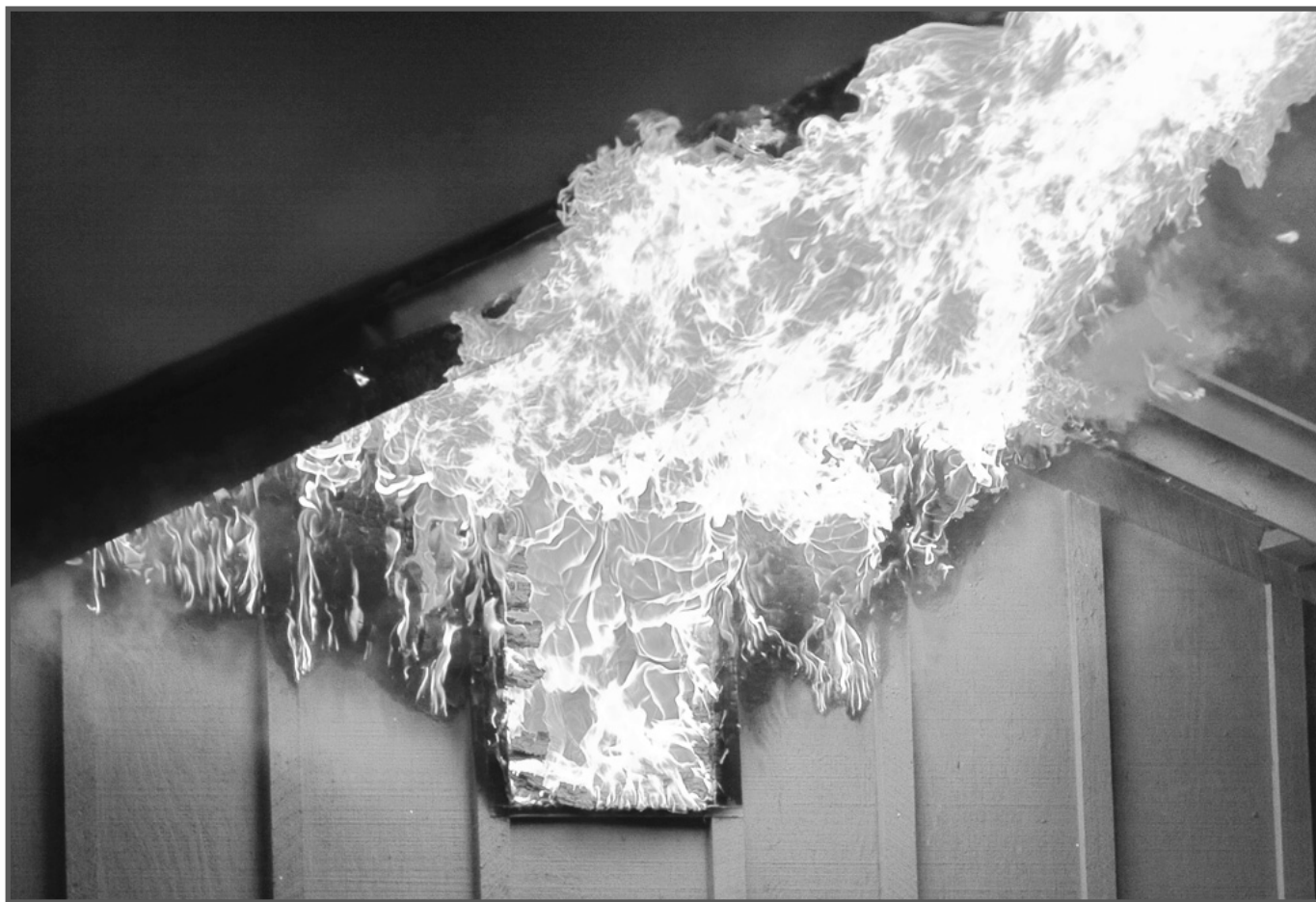
According to the US Fire Administration, electrical overloads, candles and Christmas trees increase the incidence of wintertime fires. In fact, in a recent article, they reported that each year nearly 156,000 fires in the US occur during the winter holiday season alone.

Hopefully, if a fire occurs locally, there will be no loss of life. And hopefully they will have insurance to cover their loss. But could the fire be avoided in the first place? Chances are, yes.

Area fire officials emphasize that this is a good time to be aware of everything that is being plugged in. "Please check your electrical panel for signs of rust or corrosion which might keep circuit breakers from working properly. If a breaker does trip, don't just reset it. Get it checked," recommends Chief McGouldrick of Cape Elizabeth.

Chief Thurlow of Scarborough urges caution when using extension cords: "Too many people overload extension cords and run them under rugs or furniture. This is a potential fire hazard." Dep. Chief Haskell of South Portland adds, "Take note of what's near heating units, especially electric baseboards and portable heaters. They get hot enough to ignite clothing and other items placed too closely."

Do your lights flicker? Do you have a fuse that blows when you plug something in? Do you tend to reset the circuit breaker when it trips? These are all indications that a line might be



**Christmas trees account for about 200 fires annually - mostly from electrical lights or open flames from candles - causing more than \$6 million in property damage, according to the U.S. Fire Administration.**

### Tips to prevent winter holiday fires include:

- Only use lights that have been certified by a recognized lab like UL, ETL, or CSA
- Check wiring of all lights and extension cords
- Don't use lights with broken or frayed wires
- Don't connect more than three strands of lights together
- Unplug decorations when you leave the house or go to bed
- Don't use electric lights on metallic trees

overloaded. In time, the heat generated by these problems can start a fire.

If a circuit breaker trips or a fuse blows, don't reset it and forget about it. Call a licensed electrician to check the circuits for you. If you call LaPlante Electric, we'll give you a free evaluation of the problem. Your home, your family and your life are far too important to leave to chance.

This holiday season, the local fire prevention experts have a few simple requests: "Please don't leave your holiday lights on when you're not home. Please be careful with lighted candles. Check to be sure smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are working. And remember, if a circuit breaker trips, it's doing its job to protect you. Please find out why."

*LaPlante Electric wishes everyone a safe holiday season. For more electrical safety tips visit [www.LaPlanteElectric.com](http://www.LaPlanteElectric.com) or for an evaluation of your residential electrical system, contact Michael at 761-2446.*



**Lights not certified by a recognized lab like UL, ETL, or CSA or have frayed wires increase the incidence of wintertime fires.**



**Candles are beautiful but they are becoming a major cause of house fires according to all of the area fire officials. Keep lighted candles away from trees, decorations and wrapping paper. Make sure they can't be tipped over by a curtain or pet. Above all, remember to blow them out before leaving the house or going to bed.**