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Inspect lights or risk nightmare before Christmas

With the festive season fast approaching, Queenslanders have been warned to put safety first as new research revealed the serious fire risks posed by unchecked Christmas lights and decorations.

RACQ spokesperson Kirsty Clinton warned aged, faulty or incorrectly installed lights and electronic decorations posed a serious safety threat to families if basic safety checks were not performed each year.

“Our research shows almost 60 percent of Queenslanders plan to decorate their homes for the festive season, the majority using last year’s decorations – but only about one third of those will closely inspect them before installation,” Ms Clinton said.

“With home fires a serious risk, we’re urging everyone to perform a few simple safety checks before installing lights, and to always follow proper safety instructions.

“Take a moment to inspect lights for any visible signs of damage to cords or plugs, as they can become frayed and broken after years of use, or while in storage during the year. Make sure lights have no signs of rust and are not excessively dusty.

“When setting up fairy lights and other electrical decorations, never overload power boards by piggy-back double adaptors - only one item per socket should be used.

“It’s also essential all lights purchased have an Australian Standards label and are used for their correct purpose, for example, indoor lights should never be used outside.”

Ms Clinton said the placement of Christmas lights should also be carefully considered.

“Lights generate significant heat and shouldn’t be positioned next to paper or other flammable decorations,” she said.

“We also recommend not leaving lights on unattended for long periods, particularly if nobody is home or overnight.

“With the weekend marking the start of December, we expect many families to spend the weekend making their homes festive. Some quick safety checks could ensure there are no nightmares in your home before Christmas.”

Media inquiries: RACQ spokesperson Kirsty Clinton 0438 987 158.

RACQ is Queensland’s largest club and peak independent motoring organisation. We were formed in 1905 to represent the interests of the State’s first motorists and today campaign for safer drivers, vehicles and roads on behalf of the 1.7 million members who own the Club. We offer those members a vast range of motoring, insurance, banking, entertainment and travel services and benefits, and each year respond to more than a million calls for roadside assistance.