

Holiday Lights

Bright, twinkling lights are one of the joys of the season, whether on the eaves of your home or strung on trees. While those merry little lights are a delight for many, incorrect usage can cause fires, injuries from falls or electrical shocks.

To keep the holidays festive and fun, follow these safety tips while decorating outdoors:

- Use lights — and if needed, extension cords — that are approved for outdoor use.
- Before decorating, check all light strands for damages and burned-out lights. Frayed insulation, exposed wires and broken plugs are all hazards and should be discarded. When replacing bulbs, unplug the strand.
- Consider purchasing miniature or LED lights as they use less energy and are long lasting. LED lights are also shatterproof and present no fire hazard.
- To avoid accidentally leaving your lights on, consider a timer. Make sure the timer you use is rated to handle the total wattage of your lights.

Visit myavista.com/safety for more safety tips.



Energy-saving tips for fall

The weather outside is changing and you may find yourself tempted to crank up the heat. Before you do, consider that during cooler months, heating is responsible for 40-60% of the energy use most of our customers see on their bills. Although you can't control the weather, there are ways you can manage your use.

Use this checklist to reduce energy use and improve comfort:

- **Adjust thermostat** — Set it at 68° in the winter. Lowering it even further, by just three additional degrees, can save 10% more on energy used for heating.
- **Change furnace filter and remove buildup on baseboard heaters** — Dust and debris block air from moving freely so even if your heater kicks on, rooms won't warm up efficiently.
- **Seal drafts and leaks** — Window plastic, caulk and weather stripping can help keep your warm air in and the cold air out.
- **Check fireplace dampers** — When not in use, a chimney with an open damper can allow up to 25% of the heated air in your house to escape.
- **Check water heater** — Set it at 120°. Water heating is often the second largest energy user in your home.

Find more energy-saving tips at myavista.com/energytips.





Know the signs

From the exhaust produced by your family vehicle to the fuel source of your home's heating system, carbon monoxide (CO) can live within your home without you even realizing it.

CO is a colorless, odorless, poisonous gas that is produced by the incomplete burning of various fuels, including charcoal, oil, kerosene, propane, diesel fuel, coal, wood and natural gas.

Because CO is undetectable to the human senses, it is important for people to know the signs of CO exposure. These symptoms are similar to the flu and can include:

- Headache
- Fatigue
- Shortness of breath
- Nausea
- Dizziness

To protect yourself and your family, consider installing carbon monoxide detectors throughout your home. These devices monitor CO levels and alert you should the gas reach dangerous levels. That's why CO detectors are needed and are a legal requirement in some states. CO detectors are available at most home retail outlets.

We recommend you only buy UL-listed models and follow the manufacturer's instructions for installation and

operation. The Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends installing at least one detector in a hallway near your sleeping area. By having your heating system and equipment serviced by a qualified technician at regular intervals or by the manufacturer's recommendation, you can reduce the risk of CO being present in your home or business.

Potential sources of CO that shouldn't be used indoors under any circumstances include portable generators, barbecues and charcoal grills. Items to consider for servicing inside your home or business include your water heater and any gas, oil, wood or coal-burning heaters. If you suspect that you or someone else is experiencing CO poisoning, get to fresh air immediately.

Leave the home and call for assistance from a safe place. Get medical attention immediately and inform medical staff that CO poisoning is suspected. Call 911, then call Avista at (800) 227-9187 and do not reenter the home until we can ensure your safety.

Visit myavista.com/resnsgsafety for more information on CO and natural gas safety.

Need help with your energy bill?

Avista partners with local community agencies to help customers with their energy costs. In Washington, income-eligible customers can now qualify for a new monthly bill discount program called My Energy Discount. In Idaho, financial assistance may be available through your local community action agency. Learn more about your options at myavista.com/assistance or by calling us at (800) 227-9187.



Want to avoid bill related surprises?

Sign up for Billing Alerts to get notified when you have a new statement, your payment is due, and your payment is past due.

Customers in Washington with an AMI Smart Meter can also sign up for Budget Alerts. You choose a dollar amount, and we'll let you know if your monthly bill is expected to be higher than the dollar amount you set. Visit myavista.com/alerts to learn more and sign up.

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