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CITIPOWER AND POWERCOR URGE VICTORIANS TO REMEMBER ELECTRICAL SAFETY DURING THIS FESTIVE SEASON

Victorian electricity distributors CitiPower and Powercor are urging all Victorians to identify and eliminate electrical safety risks around the home while keeping safe in the community over the festive and summer seasons.

CitiPower and Powercor General Manager Electricity Networks, Garry Audley, said items associated with the festive season including Christmas tree lights and toys have the potential to become safety hazards.

“Christmas lights are always a festive favourite, but families should be careful when decorating their Christmas trees and homes – ensuring the lights are in good condition, correctly fitted and do not pose any electrical safety hazards.

“Always read the instructions that come with Christmas lights carefully and do not place them outside your home if they were not designed for that purpose,” Mr Audley said.

CitiPower and Powercor’s practical tips for ensuring electrical safety this Christmas include:

- Checking there is no cracking in the insulation of older lights when bringing them out of the cupboard for another year,
- Having lights inspected by a qualified electrician or replacing them if you have any doubt about their safety.
- Ensuring that children do not play with toys including kites, high-powered water guns and balloons anywhere near overhead powerlines.

Mr Audley said the practice of checking Christmas lights should also be extended to checking and replacing any damaged or frayed electrical leads around the home as necessary.

“If the outer coating on the cord of your iron, toaster or any electrical device has become worn or frayed you should contact a qualified appliance repair person or registered electrical contractor to have it replaced,” he said.

Mr Audley also urged parents to keep a close eye on young children playing near electrical equipment during the holidays.

“Children must be discouraged from putting toys or other objects in electrical outlets that don’t belong there. Safety plugs should be plugged into all unused power points.

“If your home is not fitted with electrical safety switches, then please consider having them installed as a measure to help protect your family from the potential of an electric shock,” Mr Audley said.

In addition to promoting electrical safety of families, CitiPower and Powercor have established new rules to protect council workers and other community members engaged in hanging banners and signs to its power poles.

MEDIA RELEASE

The new requirements ensure greater community safety by allowing only properly trained employees to install the decorations and ensuring that the relevant local authority has established a Facilities Access Agreement with CitiPower or Powercor.

To date this year, 21 councils or other organisations have entered into the agreements with CitiPower and Powercor to hang decorations on its distribution equipment across Melbourne and Western Victoria.

“Community safety is always our primary concern when it comes to installing decorations on our power poles,” Mr Audley said.

“All we ask is that those installing the decorations complete a recognised one day training course and that the decorations meet our important safety requirements.

“This year there has been much greater awareness of the need for training and the value of having the attachment of decorations approved by CitiPower and Powercor.

“No one could argue these requirements are not in the best interest of electrical safety, for those doing the work and the broader community,” he said.

For further information about installing Christmas decorations on power poles in our service areas call CitiPower on **1300 301 101** or Powercor on **13 22 06**.

For further information about electrical safety contact Energy Safe Victoria on 9203 9700 or at www.esv.vic.gov.au.

Media enquiries: CitiPower and Powercor Australia’s 24-hour media hotline on (03) 9683 4342.