

Save energy during the holiday season

Vectren Energy Delivery (Vectren) is reminding its customers about ways to lower energy usage and have a safe holiday season.

"The holidays typically bring an increase in energy consumption, whether it's decorating your home with festive lights, hosting a houseful of guests or cooking a feast for the family," says Brad Ellsworth, president of Vectren Energy Delivery of Indiana-South. "However, there are a number of simple ways to use energy wisely and safely over the next several weeks."

Vectren suggests customers switch the lights on their holiday displays from standard incandescent or compact fluorescent (CFL) to Light Emitting Diode (LED) lights. LED lights are shatterproof, shock resistant and safe to touch. In addition, LEDs use 75 percent less energy than the typical incandescent lights used.

Vectren also recommends the following tips to help

consumers enjoy the holiday safely while using energy wisely:

- **Let the holidays serve as reminder to get an annual furnace inspection if you haven't already done so.**
- **Use fiber optic decorations.** Fiber optic trees and decorations are the ultimate in energy efficiency. In most cases, they use a single light bulb located in the base of the unit to light the entire decoration.
- **Use a timer for your holiday lights.** This allows for lights to be illuminated only when necessary.
- **Don't overload your electrical circuits.**
- **Never run appliance cords or extension cords under carpet.** They are designed to be kept cool by movement of room air around the cord.
- **Connect lights to power strips that have several outlets and built-in circuit breakers.**
- **Make sure lights and extensions cords used for outdoor**

decoration are approved for outdoor use.

- **Turn the thermostat down - to 68 degrees or lower - when you have guests.** Extra bodies in the house mean extra warmth at no cost to you.
- **When cooking for the holidays, don't forget to use your microwave oven.** Fast and efficient microwave ovens use around 50 percent less energy than conventional ovens.
- **Don't open the oven door to take a peek at what's cooking inside.** Instead, turn on the oven light and check the cooking status through the oven window. Opening the oven door lowers the temperature inside - by as much as 25 degrees - which increases cooking time and wastes energy.
- **Have your wood-burning fireplace inspected and cleaned annually** to eliminate a potential fire hazard in the chimney or flue.

For more holiday energy savings and safety tips, visit www.vectren.com.

Stay safe when sledding

One of the more popular wintertime activities, sledding attracts scores of participants every time a new coating of snow covers sloping hills. Although sledding can be fun, it also can be risky.

The United States Consumer Product Safety Commission says there are thousands of sledding-, snow tubing- and toboggan-related injuries each year. The majority of injuries occur to children age 14 and younger. Young children are vulnerable to injury because they have higher centers of gravity that can cause them to lose balance more readily. Youngsters' coordination is not fully developed as well, which makes it difficult for them to steer and avoid obstacles.

When sledding, winter revelers big and small need to put safety first before racing down those slopes.

• **Avoid collisions.** Check the sledding space carefully for any obstacles, including

waiting children at the end of the run. The Center for Injury Research and Policy at Nationwide Children's Hospital says a vast number of sledding injuries are caused by collisions. These occur when a sledder bangs into something, like a fence, tree or another person. Bone fractures are twice as likely to occur from a collision than from falling off a sled. Making sure the coast is clear helps sledders avoid collisions.

• **Dress children appropriately.** Treat sledding as you would any activity that involves a moving device. That means making children wear helmets to prevent head injuries. Head and neck injuries are common among children six years old and younger. Helmets considerably reduce injuries when worn correctly.

• **Choose the right sled.** Sleds that can be steered with handles are generally safer than snow disks or flat sheets heading down a hill.

Handles can prevent falls off of the sled, as they give a child something to hold onto.

• **Sled feet-first.** Children should be instructed to always go down a hill feet-first. This way, should they encounter any obstacles, their boots will hit it first and not their delicate heads and necks.

• **Follow the sled safety guidelines.** Read the instructions and safety guidelines for your sled. Heed the recommendation for the number of passengers on a sled at one time.

• **Check the end of the slope.** Do not sled on driveways, hills or slopes that end in a street, dropoff or pond.

• **Only allow sledding under adult supervision.** Children should have an adult with them at all times when sledding. Two adults is preferable because one can stay with a child



should he or she become injured while the other goes for help.

• **Use common sense.** Never sled in the street or on a highway. Do not ride a sled being pulled by a motorized vehicle.

• **Sled only during daylight hours.**

Unless sledding will occur in well-lit areas at night, it should be done during the day when visibility is best.

• **Dress in layers.** Sledding can be a demanding physical activity. Dress in layers that can be removed if you get too warm. Sweating while sledding increases your risk of hypothermia. Adjust clothing layers accordingly for comfort.

Sledding is an enjoyable winter activity that can provide hours of fun and exercise. Sled safely so injuries do not ruin an otherwise festive afternoon.

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