



J. B. Shepherd & Company, Inc.

1003 S. Alexander Street, Suite 9
Plant City, FL 33563
352-793-9300

Unforeseen Electrical Hazards During Halloween.

A public service announcement by:

Curtis E. Falany, P.E., President
J. B. Shepherd & Company, Inc.
Forensic Electrical Engineers

October is a month full of festive pumpkins, spooky skeletons, and sugary candy. Where families across the country decorate their homes in anticipation of trick-or-treaters on Halloween night. Often these decorations require electricity to operate as intended, which adds potential hazards that can be easily overlooked.

Below are some tips to consider when decorating your home for Halloween:

1. Inspect your lights and electronics thoroughly to ensure that they are in good condition (no broken lights or frayed cords). Check the electrical outlets you plan to use outside to make certain a Ground Fault Interrupter, also called a GFI or GFCI, is present and operational. Store all decorations appropriately according to their individual instructions.
2. **Do not** overload electrical outlets with numerous plugs. The wattage of decorations should be checked to confirm that they can handle the load. Otherwise, circuits can be overloaded, shutting off power to the area. You are also reducing your risk of a residential fire by avoiding overloading.
3. **Never** use indoor lights or electronics outdoors as indoor lights are often not weather resistant. You can check if your particular lights are indoor or outdoor rated by checking the manufacturer labels.
4. Turn off lights and electronics when not in use. For example, during the daytime for outdoor seasonal lighting, and consider using a timer to plan ahead.
5. Secure extension cords away from areas with high foot traffic in order to reduce tripping hazards.
6. Avoid installing or working near power lines. When using a ladder check for power lines prior to climbing up. Check trees and shrubs before installing any decorations as they could be in contact with a power line