Quick Guide for LED Holiday Lighting String Limitations

REFERENCE to NEC & UL

NEC refers to the **National Electrical Code** which is a set of safety regulations and guidelines to protect people and property from electrical hazards. For reference, **NEC Article 590** governs all temporary electrical installations including holiday lights. 590.3(B) states you can install tree lights and other temporary holiday displays and leave them up for a maximum of 90 days per calendar year before taking them down or reinstalling them the following annual season.

UL refers to **Underwriters Laboratory** which tests and certifies products for safety standards. The NEC and Building Codes often require the UL listing of equipment for passing inspections. **UL 588 Standard for Seasonal Holiday Decorative Products** applies to lighting strings with installation and use not exceeding 90 days per calendar year.

Using seasonal lighting strings beyond the stated time ***voids*** the UL 588 listing and ***conflicts*** with NEC Article 590 regulations.

1) All Holiday/Christmas type seasonal lighting string products are rated for use not exceeding 90 days per calendar year. Note that warranties are limited to ninety days use within a twelve month period, for either a one or three year seasonal period depending upon a retailer's policy.
2) The 120volt electrical plugs must be GFI protected at the source or at the circuit breaker.
3) Outdoor electrical plug outlets must have 'Outdoor In-Use Weatherproof' rated covers.
4) Outdoor extension cords should be factory made, and UL listed for exposure & electrical loads.
5) Using self-made plug ends known as 'vampire' plug connectors on SPT-1 or SPT-2 type wire is a 120volt electrical wiring modification and subject to NEC & UL requirements.
6) Follow NEC Section 300.5 requirements when burying any electrical wire underground.
7) Installing light wiring from one tree canopy over onto another tree is not NEC compliant.

UL 588 Supplement SD developed requirements for **all-year** use of string lights intended for longer installations and will include the following markings:

- The terms 'seasonal' and 'holiday" are not used for these products.
- String lights will be marked "This product is intended for all-year use."
- The letters on the string lights cord tag are black in a yellow background.
- The certification mark for this category requires the use of a holographic label.
- The electrical load marking is "Caution: this string light is rated ___ Watts; do not overload. Connect other string lights end-to-end up to a maximum of ___ Watts total."

All-year lights are referred to as Festoon, Bistro, Trim, or Permanent Holiday lights and differ in design from 'seasonal' lighting products. Permanent lighting installations are covered by Article 410 of the NEC for location and installations. Light fixtures attached to buildings or signs require permitting (low voltage is not exempted).

Please note the information contained in this document is subject to change and/or verification in the National Electrical Codes, Underwriters Laboratory, and any jurisdictional agency Building Codes. Contact your local Building Department for additional guidance if required. Updated 01/2025 © Southern Nights LED Landscape Lighting Inc.