Risk Assessment: Outdoor Christmas Trees with Battery Lights, Bulbs/Baubles & Decorations

1. Activity

Installing and maintaining battery-powered lights, bulbs/baubles, and other decorative items on outdoor Christmas trees.

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2. Hazards, Risks & Controls

A. Working at Height

Hazards: Falls from ladders or elevated surfaces while attaching lights or hanging baubles.
Controls:

- Stable, inspected ladder; secure footing.
- Second person to assist.
- Avoid overreaching; move the ladder often.
- Complete work during safe weather and daylight.

B. Environmental/Weather Conditions

Hazards: Slippery ground, high winds causing instability and blowing decorations.
Controls:

- Do not work during strong winds (risk of baubles swinging or ladder instability).
- Wear suitable footwear and gloves.
- Delay work in rain, storms, or ice.

C. Electrical Risks (Battery Lights)

Hazards: Battery leakage, overheating, or water ingress.
Controls:

- Outdoor-rated lights (IP44+).
- Use correct battery types.
- Inspect for damage before installation.
- Keep battery cases elevated and protected.

D. Manual Handling

Hazards: Handling bulky boxes of decorations, large baubles, or heavy ornaments.
Controls:

- Keep loads light; lift with proper technique.
- Get help for large or awkward items.

E. Trip Hazards

Hazards: Dropped ornaments, boxes on the ground, loose wiring.
Controls:

- Keep work area tidy; remove packaging promptly.
- Secure cables and battery cases firmly to the tree.

F. Fire Hazards

Hazards: Faulty lights, overheating near flammable decorations such as fabric ornaments, wood, ribbon, or plastic baubles.
Controls:

- Use non-flammable or fire-retardant decorations where possible.
- Avoid decorations that trap heat around battery packs or bulbs.
- Check for damaged lights or swollen batteries.

G. Public Safety (If Installed in Public or Semi-Public Areas)

Hazards:

- Falling baubles or ornaments in high winds.
- Sharp or breakable items (No glass baubles) posing an injury risk.
- Strings, wire, or hooks creating entanglement hazards for children or pets.

Controls:

- Prefer shatterproof baubles (plastic/resin).
- Secure ornaments with weather-resistant fixings (wire ties or strong clips).
- Avoid small detachable items or low-hanging decorations.
- Regularly inspect and re-secure after storms. – Wardens & Councillors

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H. Decoration-Specific Hazards (Bulbs, Baubles, Hanging Ornaments)

Hazards:

- No Heavy ornaments to be used.
- Sharp edges on hooks, wire hangers, or metal fixings.
- Reflective ornaments attracting birds or wildlife.

Controls:

- Prefer shatterproof, lightweight baubles.
- Use safe, closed-hook fastenings or cable ties instead of open metal hooks.
- Avoid placing heavy ornaments on thin branches.
- Distribute weight evenly to prevent branch snapping.
- Avoid very reflective or small decorations if wildlife is likely to interact.

I. Wildlife Interference

Hazards: Animals chewing or pulling decorations; reflective objects attracting birds; ingestion of loose pieces.
Controls:

- Use wildlife-friendly materials; avoid edible or glittery items that attract animals.
- Check for loose or dropped decorations.
- Avoid small detachable parts.

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3. Residual Risk

Low to moderate when all controls are implemented.

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4. Monitoring & Review

- Inspect lights, baubles, and fixings weekly and after storms.
- Replace damaged items immediately.
- Remove decorations at the end of the season and safely dispose of broken ornaments.