

Holiday Lighting Challenges To Overcome

The logo for Turf, featuring the word "Turf" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. A green grass blade graphic is integrated into the letter 'T'.The logo for Tree Services, featuring the words "Tree Services" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. A small green leaf graphic is above the 'i' in "Services". Below the main text is the tagline "Taking Tree Care to New Heights" in a smaller, italicized font.The logo for Turf DesignBuild, featuring the word "Turf" in a small, orange, sans-serif font above the word "DesignBuild" in a larger, orange, sans-serif font.The logo for PLOW, featuring the word "PLOW" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font.

Source: www.TurfMagazine.com



Aaron Wiltshire, president of [Oklahoma Landscape](#) in Tulsa, says that one big challenge with holiday lighting is paying employees overtime; with the short window to get the lights up and down, days tend to be long. But he'd rather use his own skilled employees, who know the company's systems and commitment to quality. "Hiring temporary workers to go out and do holiday lighting ... I just don't see how you can make that work," he says. "You're going to get a lot of call-backs and you're going to have problems." That, in turn, can hurt the company's overall reputation. (Conversely, doing a good job with holiday lighting can be a good way to attract new customers for other landscape services, says Wiltshire. He uses an internal software program to cross-market services to existing customers.)

Another challenge to offering this particular service can be simply the time of the year when the work takes place. "We're working in the winter, so it's stormy and windy and rainy. So, you have a bunch of elements you're dealing with, and you're working in the rain with electricity," says Alan Marchant, co-owner of [A & K Landscaping](#) in Eugene, Oregon. "There are a lot of businesses in our city that get into it for a year or two, but it's not fun work. I would love to do it in Florida."

In some parts of the country, holiday lighting services might also overlap with leaf cleanup and/or snow removal work. And even if snow doesn't come during the lighting installation season, it can come during the take-down period, which makes the lights much more difficult to remove, says Marchant.

There's a de facto deadline for that, as well: "Everyone wants them down as soon as possible, usually on Jan. 2. When you have a lot of clients, it's physically impossible to take everyone's down in one day, or even weeks."

Marchant says that holiday lighting has served its original purpose of keeping crews busy. "And it's gone beyond that," he states. "It's really filled up all that time and then some. I wish we had some of that time back."

Which brings up one of the cons of offering this service: It's very time-consuming, says Marchant. "And there's a deadline," he adds. "The date of Christmas isn't going to change! So, it can be a very stressful time of year if you get an ice storm or something and your whole schedule is thrown into chaos – there is no forgiveness."