



Norfolk skyline to light up for the holidays on Saturday's Grand Illumination celebration



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GETTING READY FOR GRAND ILLUMINATION





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NORFOLK, Va. - You know that old joke that starts with, "How many _____ does it take to change a light bulb?"

It takes on a whole new meaning when those bulbs are 20 stories off the ground.

But that's the job of a team of ten from Independent Services of Virginia; check each light that tops the Norfolk skyline ahead of the city's big Grand Illumination event that sees dozens of high and mid-rise buildings light up for the holidays.

"It's still very exciting, especially when we get those 50-something buildings finished," said Richard Cilley, who's been on the job 17 years.

This year's lighting is scheduled for Saturday, November 20 at 7 p.m., following two hours of events scattered around downtown.

Notably missing for the second year in a row is the Grand Illumination Parade.

Event organizers at the Downtown Norfolk Council decided to pass on it because of lingering COVID-19 concerns and chose to instead focus on planning numerous activities for people to enjoy, including:

- Unveiling of new holiday art installations in the NEON District
- Free Santa photo op with [Hurrah Players](#) elves outside at TCC Plaza
- Entertainment by TCC Jazz Band, Norfolk High School and Community Bands, and Siren City Pipe Band
- Performances by The Rhythm Project and other entertainment by the [Virginia Arts Festival](#)
- Snow Magic on Granby
- [Rudolph Ride](#) from The Plot
- Night one of the [7th Annual Hot Cocoa War](#)

But for many, the main event will always be the Grand Illumination of Downtown Norfolk, which Cilley and his co-workers take pride in.

"That's the sexy part of our business. The window cleaning and power washing, not quite so much, but yeah, the holiday lighting is the nice part of the year for us," he told News 3 while checking a light wall next to Jack Brown's on Granby Street, a new feature designed to give photo opportunities to Downtown visitors.

Click [HERE](#) for more information about Grand Illumination and other holiday activities in Downtown Norfolk.