

May is Electrical Safety Month

Electricity lights homes and businesses, provides warmth and keeps appliances and equipment running smoothly.

STAYING SAFE ON THE ROAD

Downed power lines can happen because of wind, storms, animals or an auto accident/collision.

- If you see a downed power line, call 911 to report it and stay in your car. You cannot tell by looking or listening if the power line is deenergized. Wait in your vehicle until an electric utility worker says it is safe.
- Do not drive over a downed power line. Doing so could cause a domino effect and bring down other lines, poles, and equipment.
- Only exit is if your vehicle or cab is on fire. If this is the case, make a solid jump from the car or cab without touching it, landing with both feet together. Then, hop away with your feet together as far as you can.

STAYING SAFE OUTSIDE

When working outside, be aware of overhead and underground power lines.

- Keep at least 10 feet away from overhead power lines. Keep any items you are carrying or using, such as long poles or other extended equipment, 10 feet away from power lines at all times.
- Make sure that all outside outlets are ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protected.
- Before digging, call 811. Buried lines such as electric, gas, water, sewer and other lines bring services indoors. Besides the dangers of coming in contact with a gas or electric line, fines due to damage are the responsibility of the homeowner or landowner.
- When you see lightning, take shelter inside the house, shop or a hard-topped vehicle for protection. Stay away from high places, and do not take shelter under an isolated tree. Stay away from items that conduct electricity, such as metal fences. If you are swimming or in a hot tub, get out. Water is an electrical conductor that is dangerous during a storm.

STAYING SAFE INSIDE

With so many people working from home, the workplace and where you live can be one and the same. This means more devices are plugged into outlets or circuits that may not be able to handle the load.

- Have a qualified electrician/licensed contractor check for hazards if you notice the following: dimming lights, a sizzling or buzzing sound, the smell of warm plastic, a switch plate that feels warm or looks scorched, sparks when plugging in or unplugging items or circuits that trip often.
- Be aware that electrical equipment can spark when flammable vapors, gases or dust are present.
- Do not overstretch a cord or use frayed or damaged cords.
- During storms, lightning can enter homes through corded phones, televisions, radios or computers. Lightning can also travel through plumbing. Unplug appliances and electronics before storms, including cell phones that are charging via electricity. Surges caused by lightning can damage electronics and appliances.

For more information on electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

ELECTRICITY 101

To stay safe around electricity, start with these **seven** basic tips:

1.

DON'T OVERLOAD OUTLETS OR CIRCUITS

Plugging in too many items or drawing too much power on a circuit can cause overheating, fire, and damage to devices.



2.

DON'T USE FAULTY ELECTRICAL CORDS OR PLUGS

Do not use cords that look frayed, worn or cracked. Do not use broken plugs. Never remove the grounding pin from a three-pronged plug.



3.

HAVE YOUR ELECTRICIAN'S NUMBER IN YOUR PHONE

Most electrical repairs or installations are not DIY projects. Hire an expert to avoid serious injury or wiring problems.



4.

BE CAREFUL AROUND H₂O

Never use electricity while standing in damp or wet conditions. Keep all electrical devices away from water, including cell phones that are charging.



5.

EVALUATE YOUR APPLIANCES

Do not use appliances in disrepair. Older or broken appliances can overheat, start a fire, and cause serious injuries.



6.

TEST YOUR GFCIs

Outlets near a water source should be equipped with GFCIs, which help prevent shock and electrocution caused by ground faults. Test monthly to make sure they are working.



7.

MAKE SURE YOUR HOME IS UP TO CODE

Your home should be properly wired and electrically sound. Contact a reputable electrician to evaluate your home.



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