

# Electrical Safety Tips

## Published Home Electrical Safety Tips



### Outlets

- Replace old outlets with modern ones that accept three-pronged polarized plugs (only if your circuit has a ground wire).
- Never alter a plug to fit and outdated outlet.
- Teach children to respect outlets. Installing plastic safety covers in your home will keep them safe while they are at home, but they must learn to stay away from outlet when they are in homes or businesses.
- Check for outlets that have loose-fitting plugs, which can overheat and lead to fire.
- Replace any missing, damaged, or broken outlet, wall, or switch plates.
- No outlet, extension cord, light fixture, surge protector, fuse, or circuit should be overloaded.



### Cords

- Make sure cords are in good condition—not frayed or cracked.
- Cords should never be nailed or stapled to the wall, baseboard or to another object.
- Do not place cords under carpets or rugs or rest any furniture on them. Make sure they are placed out of traffic areas. Do not pinch, twist or crimp an electrical cord.
- Extension cords should only be used on a temporary basis; they are not intended to be used as

permanent household wiring.

- **Use extension cords properly. They cannot be used as permanent wiring. Do not use indoor extension cords outside, only use extension cords marked for “outdoor use”.**
- **Make sure extension cords have safety closures to help prevent young children from shock hazards and mouth burn injuries.**
- **Surge protectors should be used properly and never plugged into each other.**
- **If your surge protector is more than 10 years old replaced it with one bearing the seal of a nationally recognized certification agency.**

### **Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs)**

GFCIs can help prevent electrocution. They should be used in any area where water and electricity may come into contact. When a GFCI senses current leakage in an electrical circuit, it assumes a ground fault has occurred. It then interrupts power fast enough to help prevent serious injury from electrical shock.

### **Arc-fault circuit-interrupter (AFCI)**

AFCIs protect against fire by continuously monitoring the electrical current in a circuit and shutting off the circuit when unintended arcing occurs. Unintentional arcs can occur at loose connections or where cords have been damaged. Such arcs can lead to high temperature or sparks that can start fires. The NFPA requires these in the bedrooms of new homes.

### **Light Bulbs**

Check the wattage of all bulbs in light fixtures to make sure they are the correct wattage for the size of the fixture. Make sure bulbs are screwed in securely; loose bulbs may overheat.

### **Space Heaters**

Space heaters are meant to supply supplemental heat. Keep space heaters at least 3 ft. away from any combustible materials such as bedding, clothing, draperies, furniture and rugs. Don't use in rooms where children are unsupervised and remember to turn off and unplug when not in use. Do not use space heaters with extension cords; plug directly into an outlet on a relatively unburdened circuit.

### **Warnings**

Recurring problems with blowing fuses or tripping circuit breakers. This is an indication that there is an electrical overload somewhere in your home and/or there is too much demand on the circuit.

If your lights intermittently flicker or flicker every time an appliance turns on or demands more power then you must pinpoint the problem as soon as possible. This is an indication that circuits are overloaded and you may need to add circuits.

If an extension cord, appliance cord, electrical cord, outlet, or light fixture is hot to the touch, discolored, deformed, smoking, or you smell a rubbery odor, cut the power to the item immediately by unplugging or switching off the circuit.

**Electrical Fire Safety Brochures** are available in the lobby at the **Excelsior Fire District's Station #1**.