

Electrical Safety: Talking Points

For the Media

- If a fuse blows or a circuit breaker trips often, find out why and correct the problem. Replace fuses with the correct amp rating for the circuit they protect; never replace a fuse with a higher rated fuse. If the problem continues, call an electrician.
- Only plug one heat-producing appliance (such as a coffeemaker, toaster, space heater, etc.) into a receptacle outlet at a time.
- Buy only appliances that are listed by a qualified testing laboratory.
- Replace cracked and damaged electrical cords.
- Pinching cords against walls or furniture or running them under carpets or across doorways can cause a fire.
- Use extension cords for temporary wiring only.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for plugging an appliance into a receptacle outlet.
- Avoid overloading outlets. Plug only one high-wattage appliance into each receptacle outlet at a time.
- Consider having additional circuits or receptacles added by a qualified electrician.
- If an appliance is malfunctioning, unplug it if it is safe to do so. If necessary, cut off power by unscrewing a fuse or turning off the circuit breaker.
- Arc-fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) shut off electricity when a dangerous condition occurs. Consider having them installed in your home. Use a qualified electrician.
- Ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) reduce the risk of shock. GFCIs shut off an electrical circuit when it becomes a shock hazard.
- Test AFCIs and GFCIs once a month according to the manufacturer's recommendations.
- Tamper-resistant receptacles have spring-loaded shutters that close off the slots of the receptacle. These receptacles are important in making a home a safe place for children.
- Keep ladders away from overhead power lines including the electrical service into your home. Never touch a power line. Stay at a safe distance — you could be electrocuted.
- Report downed power lines to authorities.
- Some power lines are underground. Call your local authority regarding digging.

For Parents and Kids

- In homes with small children, install tamper-resistant electrical receptacles.
- Replace cracked and damaged electrical cords.
- Only plug one heat-producing appliance (such as a coffee maker, toaster, space heater, etc.) into a receptacle outlet at a time.
- Pinching cords against walls or furniture or running them under carpets or across doorways can cause a fire.
- Use extension cords for temporary wiring only.
- If receptacles or switches feel warm, shut off the circuit and have them checked by an electrician.
- Do not place cloth over a light bulb to diffuse or soften the light. Buying a low wattage or soft white or pastel light bulb can help you achieve this effect without creating a fire hazard.
- Use light bulbs that match the recommended wattage on the lamp or fixture.
- Call a qualified electrician or landlord if you have :
 - recurring problems with blowing fuses or tripping circuit breakers.
 - a tingling feeling when you touch an electrical appliance.
 - discolored or warm wall outlets.
 - a burning smell or rubbery odor coming from an appliance.
 - flickering lights.
 - sparks from an outlet.



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