



Check It and Correct It--Prevent Electrical Hazards in Your Home

It only takes a few minutes and is definitely worth your time! Problems with electrical wiring systems cause approximately 40,000 residential fires each year, many resulting in injury, death and extensive damage to personal property.

Protect yourself and your family by monitoring the electrical systems in your home:

- Do not overload outlets and extension cords. Most home lighting and wall outlet branch circuits may carry as much as 1500 watts (15-ampere branch); some kitchen circuits as much as 2000 watts (20-ampere branch). An extension cord's rating capacity is labeled on the cord.
- Inspect electrical cords to ensure they are not frayed, damaged or placed under rugs or carpets. Extension cords should never be used as a substitute for permanent wiring.
- Use the proper wattage light bulbs in light fixtures and lamps. Too high wattage or the wrong type of bulb may lead to fire through overheating—ceiling fixtures, recessed lights and "hooked" lamps trap heat.
- Place halogen lamps away from curtains, beds, rugs or other furnishings.
- Consider installing Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCI's) GFCI's detect any loss (leakage) of electrical current in a circuit that might be traveling through a person using an electrical product. If a loss is detected, the GFCI immediately shuts off the current before severe injury or electrocution can occur.
- Test your smoke detector and replace smoke detector batteries annually.
- Follow appropriate safety precautions and manufacturer's instructions

Helpful resources: National Electric Safety Foundation, <http://www.nesf.org> and U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CSPC)

*Copyright 2002 * National Safety Council * All Rights Reserved. Reviewed 4/05*