



**MAY IS  
ELECTRICAL  
SAFETY  
MONTH**

*Toolkit for Electrical Contractors*



# Electrical Safety

Flipping a light switch. Plugging in a coffeemaker. Charging a laptop computer. These are second nature for most of us. Electricity makes our lives easier. However, we need to be cautious and keep safety in mind.



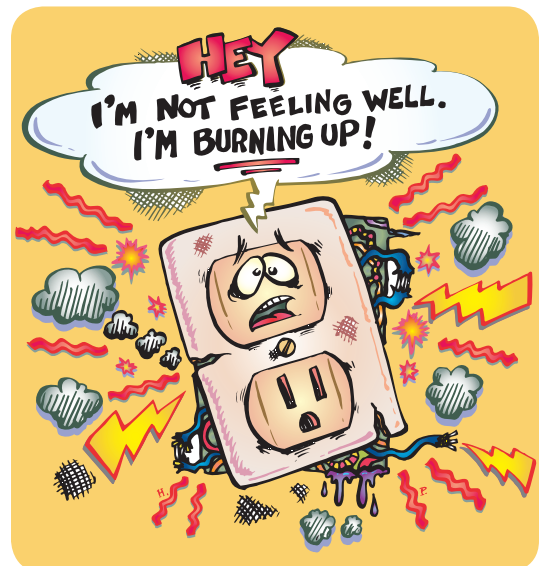
## SAFETY TIPS

- Have all electrical work done by a qualified electrician.
- When you are buying or remodeling a home, have it inspected by a qualified private inspector or in accordance with local requirements.
- Only use one heat-producing appliance (such as a coffee maker, toaster, space heater, etc.) plugged into a receptacle outlet at a time.
- Major appliances (refrigerators, dryers, washers, stoves, air conditioners, microwave ovens, etc.) should be plugged directly into a wall receptacle outlet. Extension cords and plug strips should not be used.
- Arc-fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) shut off electricity when a dangerous condition occurs. Consider having them installed in your home.
- Use ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) to reduce the risk of shock. GFCIs shut off an electrical circuit when it becomes a shock hazard. They should be installed inside the home in bathrooms, kitchens, garages and basements. All outdoor receptacles should be GFCI protected.
- Test AFCIs and GFCIs once a month according to the manufacturer's recommendations. You do not need a flame to start a fire. Fires can start when heat builds up near things that burn. This can happen when a hot light bulb is near things that burn, such as cloth or paper, or a cord has been placed under a carpet.
- Check electrical cords to make sure they are not running across doorways or under carpets. Extension cords are intended for temporary use. Have a qualified electrician add more receptacle outlets so you don't have to use extension cords.
- Use a light bulb with the right number of watts. There should be a sticker that indicates the right number of watts.

## IMPORTANT REMINDER

Call a qualified electrician or your landlord if you have:

- Frequent problems with blowing fuses or tripping circuit breakers
- A tingling feeling when you touch an electrical appliance
- Discolored or warm wall outlets
- A burning or rubbery smell coming from an appliance
- Flickering or dimming lights
- Sparks from an outlet

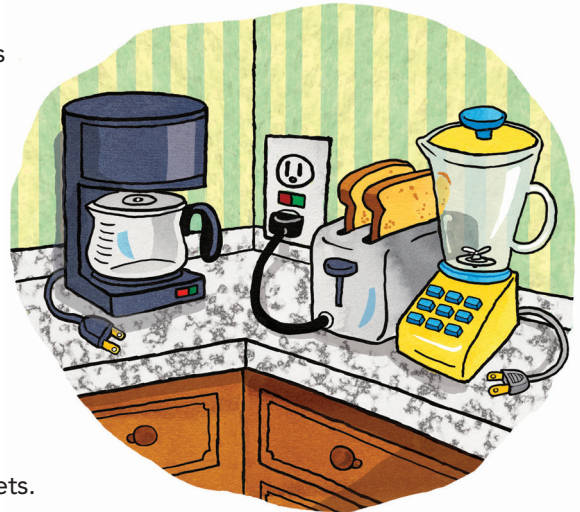


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The leading information and knowledge resource on fire, electrical and related hazards



# Electrical Safety: Checklist

- Call a qualified electrician or your landlord if you have:**
  - Frequent problems with blowing fuses or tripping circuit breakers
  - A tingling feeling when you touch an electrical appliance
  - Discolored or warm wall outlets
  - A burning or rubbery smell coming from an appliance
  - Flickering or dimming lights
  - Sparks from an outlet
- Inspect your home** for hidden electrical hazards.
- Check electrical cords** to make sure the wires are not damaged, cracked or loose. If the cords need to be repaired, take the item to a professional repair shop, hire an electrician or replace with a new item.
- Make sure cords** are not running across doorways or under carpets. If they are, have a qualified electrician install more outlets.
- Keep children away** from electric cords and outlets. Cords placed in the mouth can cause a burn and objects placed in a receptacle can cause a shock, burns or electrocution.
- Make sure that** all receptacle outlets and switches have faceplates.
- Never put more** than one plug in each receptacle. An outlet may have one or more receptacles — one to receive each plug.
- Be sure that the bulbs** in your lights match what is safe for the lamp. There should be a sticker that indicates the maximum wattage for the light bulb — such as use maximum of a 60 watt bulb.
- Light bulbs in the living area** of your home, including closets, should have a shade or globe for protection. Light bulbs can get very hot and cause a fire if something that can burn is too close.
- Ground-fault circuit interrupters** (GFCIs) reduce the risk of shock by shutting off an electrical circuit when the circuit could be a shock hazard. Your home should have GFCIs in the kitchen, bathroom(s), laundry, basement, garage, and outdoor areas.
- Heat producing appliances** such as a toaster, coffee maker, iron or microwave oven draw a lot of electricity. Plug only one heat producing appliance in each outlet to prevent wiring from overheating.
- Buy only appliances** that are listed by a qualified testing laboratory.
- Arc-fault circuit interrupters** (AFCIs) protect against fire by monitoring the electrical current in a circuit and shutting off the circuit when unintended arcing occurs. AFCIs should be installed in your home. If not, have a qualified electrician install them for you.
- Keep ladders away** from overhead power lines, including the electrical service into your home.



**Think Green!** Turn off lights when you are not in the room. Unplug appliances when not in use.



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**Keeping Your Community Safe and Energized!**

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# Outdoor Electrical Safety

Lighting to improve the look and safety of our homes, electric tools to make our outdoor work easier, and power lines to our home, all need to be handled with care.

## Outside Electrical Work

- Have a qualified electrician do all electrical work.
- To prevent an electrical shock, make sure all your outside electrical receptacles are GFCI (ground-fault circuit interrupter) protected.

## Equipment Safety

- Use lighting and power tools that are listed by a qualified test laboratory and make sure they are made for outdoor use.
- Store your electrical tools indoors.
- Keep electric tools away from children.
- Keep the area around your electric meter and other electrical equipment clear.
- Check lighting and extension cords for damage before using. Replace any damaged cords right away.
- Use extension cords that are listed by a qualified test laboratory and are marked for outdoor use.
- Extension cords are not meant for long-term use.

## POWER LINES

Have a professional tree cutting service trim branches that might fall on electric wiring. Use a wooden or fiberglass ladder outside. Keep the ladder at least 10 feet away from power lines. Never touch anyone or anything in contact with a downed wire. Power lines may be live, stay a safe distance away. Report downed wires to authorities right away.

## IMPORTANT REMINDER

Call **"Before You Dig"** (8-1-1) before any digging on your property. They will mark where your underground utilities are located. *It's a free service!*



Your Source for SAFETY Information

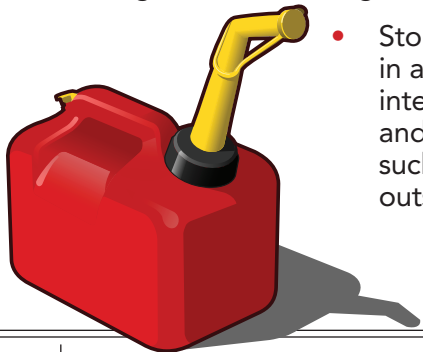
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# Generator Safety

**Downed utility lines, power company blackouts, heavy snow falls or summer storms can all lead to power outages. Many people turn to a portable generator for a temporary solution without knowing the risks.**

- Generators should be used in well ventilated locations outside at least 5 feet (1.5 metres) away from all doors, windows, and vent openings. Measure the 5-foot (1.5 metres) distance from the generator exhaust system to the building.
- Never use a generator in an attached garage, even with the door open.
- Place generators so that exhaust fumes can't enter the home through windows, doors or other openings in the building. The exhaust must be directed away from the building.
- Make sure to install carbon monoxide (CO) alarms in your home. Follow manufacturer's instructions for correct placement and mounting height.
- Turn off generators and let them cool down before refueling. Never refuel a generator while it is hot.



- Store fuel for the generator in a container that is intended for the purpose and is correctly labeled as such. Store the containers outside of living areas.

## Just Remember...

When plugging in appliances, make sure they are plugged directly into the generator or a heavy duty outdoor-rated extension cord. The cords should be checked for cuts, tears and that the plug has all three prongs, especially a grounding pin.

If you must connect the generator to the house wiring to power appliances, have a qualified electrician install a properly rated transfer switch in accordance with the National Electrical Code® (NEC) and all applicable state and local electrical codes.

## FACT

- ! A person can be poisoned by a small amount of CO over a longer period of time or by a large amount of CO over a shorter amount of time.



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