

SAFETY SENSE

Keep Your Home Safe From Electrical Hazards

(NAPSA)—Your home is a safe haven from the world, a place to relax and unwind with family and friends. Unfortunately, hidden dangers may be lurking behind the walls that threaten your safety and that of your loved ones. That's why it's a good time to find out just how safe your home is from electrical hazards.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, there's plenty of reason for concern: Nearly 32,000 fires in the home were caused by faulty house wiring or damaged wiring devices each year between 1999 and 2002. However, there is something you can do to safeguard your home from dangerous electrical hazards. The Leviton Institute recommends that with May being National Electrical Safety Month, homeowners conduct an inspection of their home and outdoor areas as part of their regular spring-cleaning projects.

First, make sure pool pumps, hot tubs and outdoor appliances that require electricity are plugged into GFCI-protected outlets with weatherproof covers. Ground fault circuit interruptors safeguard you and your loved ones from dangerous electrical shock. GFCIs detect when current is leaking from an electrical circuit to ground and automatically shut off the power at the receptacle. They have saved thousands of lives since their introduction in 1972. When choosing a GFCI, it's important to ensure the device is stamped with the UL logo.

In addition, kitchens, bathrooms, laundry rooms, or any other place around the house that has a water source within six feet



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of the receptacle needs GFCI protection. Check all outlets and switches for cracks, broken parts or loose-fitting plugs. Replace defective devices immediately, as well as those that feel hot to the touch. You should also inspect all power cords and extension cords: Those showing signs of cracking, fraying or obvious wear should be replaced immediately. Never run extensions under rugs, carpets or furniture where damage can hide.

Make sure outlets are not overloaded. Most household outlets are typically rated around 15-20 amps. Plugging too many appliances into one outlet can exceed that rating and create a fire or shock hazard.

When you use an extension cord, always plug the appliance into the extension cord first before plugging the extension cord into the outlet.

For more information, visit www.leviton.com.