

Safety Around The Home

Stop Shocks And Electric Fires Before They Start

(NAPSA)—Give your home a safety checkup. Just as regular wellness checkups are critical for maintaining your health, routine safety checkups are critical for the safety of your home.

The Danger

An average of 51,000 electrical home structure fires occur each year, claiming almost 500 lives, injuring more than 1,400 people and causing more than \$1.3 billion in property damage, reports the National Fire Protection Association. In addition, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, nearly 400 people are electrocuted in the U.S. each year.

Many of these disasters can be prevented simply by understanding basic electrical safety principles and adhering to safe practices.

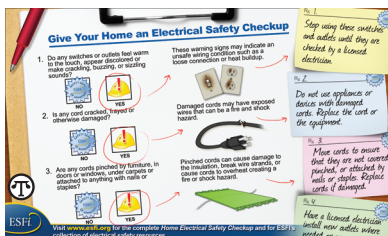
What You Can Do

It's a bright idea to look around your house and ask a few important questions:

- Are all switches and outlets working properly?
- Are any switches or outlets warm to the touch?
- Do any switches or outlets make crackling, buzzing or sizzling sounds?

Those can be signs of an unsafe wiring condition such as a loose connection or heat buildup. Stop using any problem outlets until they're checked by a licensed electrician.

- Is any cord cracked, frayed or otherwise damaged? If so, replace



it. Damaged cords may have exposed wires that can be fire and shock hazards.

- Are cords attached to anything with nails or staples?
- Are cords under carpets?

Pinched cords and wires can cause damage to the insulation, break wire strands or cause cords to overheat. Move them so they're no longer covered, pinched or attached by nails or staples. Replace any that are damaged.

- Are fuses or circuit breakers the correct size for the circuit? Fuses and circuit breakers are safety devices that stop the electric current if it exceeds a safe level. If they frequently blow or trip, contact a licensed electrician.

The Electrical Safety Foundation International reminds you that the best way to protect your family and your home against the risk of electrical fires or electrocution is to hire a qualified, licensed electrician to perform any electrical work in your home.

Learn More

For a complete home electrical safety checkup checklist, electrical safety solutions and more safety tips, visit www.esfi.org.