

# SAFETY SENSE

## Your Home: Safe From Electrical Hazards?

(NAPSA)—Most people would be shocked if they knew the potential danger posed by electrical hazards hidden in the walls of their homes or lying unseen on their grounds. According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, over 400 people are electrocuted in the United States every year. To help ensure that your home is truly safe, here's a checklist from the Leviton Institute:

### Don't Overload Outlets:

With power strips and surge protectors, it's all too easy to add more appliances to an outlet than it was designed to handle. By overloading circuits, you can create a fire hazard.

**Outlets and Switches:** Replace any outlet or switch that has broken parts or cracks, feels warm to the touch or has plugs that hang loose.

**Power Cords and Extension Cords:** Examine power and extension cords for fraying or cracking. Replace taped-over cords or those showing wear. Never run cords or extensions under carpets, rugs or furniture, where damage might be hidden.

**Use of Power Tools:** Don't use power tools, even if they are properly grounded, in wet or damp spots.

**Install GFCIs and Test Them Monthly:** GFCIs (ground fault circuit interrupters) have prevented hundreds of electrocutions and untold numbers of injuries since the early 1970s. The National Electrical Code requires GFCI-equipped outlets in rooms with a water source or damp ground such as kitchens, bathrooms, garages, laundry rooms and crawl spaces, and in outdoor locations such as hot tubs or pool-



**A ground fault circuit interrupter such as the one shown above can save lives.**

side, where they should be equipped with weatherproof covers. Testing them is simple. Just follow these three easy steps:

1. Plug a lamp or radio into the GFCI. Turn on the lamp or radio.
2. Press the TEST button. Lamp or radio should go off.

If the lamp or radio doesn't go off, the GFCI is damaged or was miswired during installation. Please call a qualified electrician.

3. Press the RESET button. Lamp or radio should come back on.

If the lamp or radio doesn't come back on, the GFCI is damaged and must be replaced. Call a qualified electrician.

If you are not sure that your GFCI is testing and resetting properly for any reason, play it safe and call a qualified electrician. Be sure to make your safety inspection a yearly habit and hire a licensed electrician to conduct an in-depth inspection every 10 years.