

Electrical Safety

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There are dozens of small electrical appliances used in our home everyday. It is important that these are kept in good repair and used properly to prevent fires and burn injuries.

Safety Testing Organization

All appliances should bear the label of a recognized testing and certification organization such as CSA (Canadian Standards Association). This insures that the item has been constructed in accordance with nationally accepted safety standards.

Hazards

- Replace broken or frayed cords.
- Do not use electrical appliances in or near water.
- Do not plug too many appliances into the same outlet.
- Replace cords that feel warm or hot.
- Appliances that give off smoke or a burning odour should be repaired by a technician.
- Unplug appliances when they are not in use.
- Keep appliances clean and free from dust and grease.
- Electrical appliances should be repaired only by certified service personnel.
- Electrical problems within the home should be repaired by an electrician.
- Use extension cords of the proper weight and size.
- Cords intended for indoor use should never be used outdoors.
- Children should have adult supervision when using an appliance.
- When a fuse blows, locate the source of the problem and correct it before replacing the fuse.
- Never touch appliance cords, extension cords, electrical equipment, or light switches with wet hands or feet.
- Never touch appliance cords, extension cords, electrical equipment, or light switches while standing in water, or while in contact with a metallic object.

Remember: Water and electricity do not mix!!

Be Safe to a Fault

One of the most important safety devices in your home could very well be a simple electrical device called a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI). They should be installed in all rooms where water is commonly used in your home, such as the kitchen, bathrooms and laundry room, as a protection against electrical shock.

GFCIs are designed to provide protection against electrical shock from ground faults, which occur when the electrical current in the appliance strays outside the path where it should normally flow. This "ground fault," or unintentional electric path between a source of current and a grounded surface, occurs when current is "leaking" somewhere - in effect, electricity is escaping to the ground. If your body provides a path to the ground for this leakage, you could be burned, severely shocked or electrocuted.

GFCIs, however, are subject to wear and possible damage (as from a strong power surge during an electrical storm) and should be tested regularly. Once a month, in fact.