

## Eliminate Top Safety Threats to Prevent Electrical Injuries

Each year approximately 1,000 residents in the United States die as result of electric shock. An additional 5,000 individuals seek emergency treatment for electric shocks. Approximately 20% of all electrical injuries occur in children, with the highest incidence occurring in toddlers and adolescents.

Don't let you or members of your family become a figure in this statistic. Prevent electrical injuries by practicing these safety measures:

### Outlets

Avoid overloading with too many appliances. Wall plates that are found broken on the outlet should be replaced as soon as possible. If young children are present, make sure to have safety covers on all of the unused outlets that are accessible to them.

### Plugs

Check for loose-fitting plugs that can overheat and lead to fire. You should never remove the ground pin in order to make a three-prong plug to fit a two-conductor outlet, as it could lead to electrical shock. All plugs should fit securely into an outlet; a plug should never be forced into an outlet if it doesn't fit.

### Cords

Make sure that cords are in good condition and that they are not frayed or cracked. They should never be nailed or stapled to the wall, baseboard, or to any other object. Furniture should not rest on the cord. Cords should not be placed in high-traffic areas of the house. Extension cords are to be used only temporarily; they are in no way to be considered as permanent household wiring. Both cords and extension cords should not be overloaded.

### Light Bulbs

Check the wattage of all bulbs in lighting fixtures to make sure that they are the correct wattage for the size of the fixture. Bulbs that have a higher wattage than necessary should be replaced. If you aren't sure of the correct wattage, make sure to check with the manufacturer. When inspecting light bulbs, make sure that they are screwed in securely - as loose bulbs may overheat.

### Appliances

If one appliance repeatedly blows a fuse, trips a circuit breaker, or if it has given you a shock, unplug it and make sure to have it repaired or replaced. In addition, appliances should not be used near water.

### Computer / Entertainment Equipment

Check to see that the equipment is in good condition and working properly. Make sure to look for cracks or any damage in the wiring, plugs, and connectors.

It is also important to realize that electrical injuries don't always occur from things that are directly visible. Unsafe wiring in the walls of the home can also lead to electrical shocks, fire, and other hazards. When having additions, renovations, or upgrades done to your house that involve

electrical work, it is vital to have a qualified electrician to do the work. The electrician should obtain a working permit that ensures a qualified inspector checks the electrical work, making sure it complies with the proper codes.

Taking these safety precautions will help you and your family stay safe and prevent electrical injuries!