

Electric Safety

How often do you think about electrical safety probably not as often as you should. Electrical Safety is taken for granted that is, until there is an incident which results in destruction to products, property and, possibly injury or even death to individuals.

Electricity is everywhere; and individuals at home, in the school and workplace need to understand how to use electricity and electrical products safely.

That is why Oberlin Municipal Light and Power System joined the National Electrical Safety Foundation which was established in 1994 to promote electrical safety in the home, school and workplace.

OMLPS have several informational brochures and booklets regarding electric safety for the home, workplace, outdoors, seasons and holidays. Please contact Doug McMillan, Utility Services Manager at 775-7260 for free safety information. If you would like to log on to the National Electrical Safety Foundation website, you may do so at www.nesf.org.

Here is a quick residential electric safety checklist to help make your home electrically safe.

OUTLETS

Check for outlets that have loose-fitting plugs, which can overheat and lead to fire. Replace any missing or broken wall plates. Make sure there are safety covers on all unused outlets that are accessible to children.

CORDS

Make sure cords are in good condition not frayed or cracked. Make sure they are placed out of traffic areas. Cords should never be nailed or stapled to the wall, baseboard or to another object. Do not place cords under carpets or rugs or rest any furniture on them.

EXTENSION CORDS

Check to see that the cords are not overloaded. Additionally, extension cords should only be used on a temporary basis; they are not intended as permanent household wiring. Make sure extension cords have safety closures to help prevent young children from shock hazards and mouth burn injuries.

PLUGS

Make sure plugs fit your outlets. Never remove the ground pin (the third prong) to make a three-prong plug fit a two-conductor outlet; this could lead to an electrical shock. **NEVER FORCE A PLUG INTO AN OUTLET IF IT DOESN'T FIT.**

Plugs should fit securely into outlets. Avoid overloading outlets with too many appliances.

GROUND FAULT CIRCUIT INTERRUPTERS (GFCIs)

GFCIs can help prevent electrocution. They should be used in any area where water and electricity may come into contact. When a GFCI senses current leakage in an electrical circuit, it assumes a ground fault has occurred. It then interrupts power fast enough to help prevent serious injury from electrical shock. Test GFCIs regularly according to the manufacturer's instructions to make sure they are working properly.

LIGHT BULBS

Check the wattage of all bulbs in light fixtures to make sure they are the correct wattage for the size of the fixture. Replace bulbs that have higher wattage than recommended; if you don't know the correct wattage, check with the manufacturer of the fixture. Make sure bulbs are screwed in securely; loose bulbs may overheat the socket and burn you.

CIRCUIT BREAKERS/FUSES

Circuit breakers and fuses should have the correct current rating for their circuit. If you do not know the correct size, have an electrician identify and label the size to be used. Always replace a fuse with the same correct size fuse.

WATER AND ELECTRICITY DON'T MIX

Don't leave plugged in appliances where they might come into contact with water. If a plugged-in appliance falls into water, **NEVER** reach in to pull it out even if it's turned off. Unplug it first. If you have an appliance that has gotten wet, don't use it until it has been checked by a qualified repair person.

APPLIANCES

If an appliance repeatedly blows a fuse, trips a circuit breaker, or if it has given you a shock, unplug it and have it repaired or replaced.

ENTERTAINMENT/COMPUTER EQUIPMENT

Check to see that the equipment is in good condition and working properly; look for cracks or damage in wiring, plugs, and connectors. Use a surge protector bearing the seal of a nationally recognized certification agency.