

Electrical Safety & Fire Prevention

Facts

- Electrical fires are one of the leading causes of fire fatalities in Washington State.
- Additions or modifications to electrical wiring should be done by a licensed electrician. If you have frequent electrical problems, contact a licensed electrician to check the problem or to inspect the system.

Electrical Distribution

- Know the location of the electrical panel in your home. The panel cover should have a label or tag with a date of the last inspection; if more than ten years, an inspection is advisable. You should know how to trip the main circuit breaker at the electrical panel to turn off all power to the house.
- Be sure electrical outlets and the electrical distribution systems are adequate to prevent overloading.
- Check to be sure all outlets and switches have cover plates so that no wiring is exposed.
- Arrange furnishings so that outlets are available without the use of extension cords.
- Don't cover electrical cords with rugs, carpets, or furniture. Don't run extension cords under doors. Don't drape electrical cords over hooks or nails.
- If an extension cord is necessary, be sure it is Underwriters Laboratory or Factory Mutual listed.
- Be sure extension cords are not frayed or cracked and are carrying their proper load.
- Check your power strips and surge protectors for Consumer Product Safety Commission recalls.
- Be sure light bulbs are the proper size for the outlet or appliance.

Electrical Appliances

- Inspect, clean, and maintain all appliances regularly to make sure they operate properly. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for maintenance. If an appliance emits a burning odor, makes an unusual sound, or the cord feels warm to the touch, have it inspected by a qualified person. Keep appliances in a cool, dry place to prevent rusting.
- Keep space heaters, stoves, irons, and other heat-producing appliances away from furniture, curtains, bedding, and towels. Also, give televisions, stereos, and computers plenty of air-space so they won't overheat.
- Unplug small appliances, such as can openers, when not in use.
- Be sure all electrical appliances are Underwriters Laboratory or Factory Mutual listed.

Electrical Emergencies

When an electrical emergency occurs, take the following action:

- If an appliance emits a burning odor or operates improperly, unplug it if it can be done safely.
- If a serious electrical malfunction occurs in your home or workplace, treat it the same as a fire.
 - Turn off the power at the circuit breaker and CALL 9-1-1.
 - Notify other occupants.
 - Activate the fire alarm if available and exit promptly.

References: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission www.cpsc.gov; National Fire Protection Association www.nfpa.org; Underwriters Laboratory www.ul.com.



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Call 509-754-4666 to request an EFD Public Educator visit your organization or civic group.
More fire & life safety information at www.ephrata.org/209.html.