



Basic Home Electrical Safety Check

To make your home as electrically safe as possible, the Electrical Safety Foundation international suggests that you take a few minutes each year to inspect the condition of your electrical system, electrical cords, extension cords, plugs and outlets. Symptoms of home electrical wiring problems include:

- Household lights that dim or flicker, or a TV picture that shrinks in size.
- Evidence of arcs, sparks, or flashes of bright light in the electrical system.
- Sizzling or buzzing sounds emanating from the electrical system.
- Damaged, cut, broken, or cracked wire insulation.
- Frequent blown fuses, or circuit breakers that trip frequently.

Outlets are also safety hazards once they become worn or damaged. Replace such outlets as soon as possible. Take a moment to gauge the temperature of the faceplates on your electrical outlets. If a plate is warm or hot to the touch, it could indicate a serious wiring problem that should be further investigated by a qualified electrician.

In addition, take note of any switch plates that are discolored. Discoloration could indicate that the electrical wiring behind the switch plate is overheating. Inspect switch plates to see if they are warm. Once you have checked your electrical system, take a few minutes and check for worn or damaged cords. Statistics show that two-thirds of all electrical fires are caused by these items.

- Replace any electrical cords that are in poor condition. Also, check that all cords between power supply, extension cords and wall outlets are secure and that there are no exposed blades (prongs).
- Next, check all electrical plugs to make sure they fit properly into their outlets. Plugs that are loose in the outlet are potential fire hazards, and should be repaired or replaced.
- Make sure that no one in your home forces three-prong plugs into two-slot outlets. Appliances with three-prong plugs should only be inserted into three-slot outlets or three-slot extension cords.

Finally, make sure that you have not overloaded any circuit or extension cord. Remember that extension cords are not intended to permanently extend a home's wiring system.

ESFI recommends contacting a certified electrician for electrical repairs. Before any work is done on your electrical system, always disconnect power from the circuit

breaker panel or fuse box before attempting to replace a worn or damaged wall outlet. For more electrical safety tips, visit www.electrical-safety.org.