

# RESIDENTIAL SAFETY



## Outlets and Plugs

Check for outlets that have loose-fitting plugs, which can overheat and lead to fire. 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. Replace any missing or broken wall plates. Make sure there are safety covers on all unused outlets that are accessible to children. Check for any hot or discolored outlet wall plates; that may indicate dangerous heat buildup at the connections.

## Power Cords and Extension Cords

Make sure all power cords and extension cords are in good condition, not frayed or cracked. Cords should never be nailed or stapled to the wall, baseboard, or another object. Do not place cords in high traffic areas or under carpets, rugs or furniture. Extension cords should only be used on a temporary basis; they are not intended as permanent household wiring. Make sure extension cords and electrical products are listed by an independent testing lab such as UL, CSA, ETL or MET labs, and are properly rated for their intended use, indoor or outdoor, and meet or exceed the power needs of the appliance or tool being plugged into it.

## Light Bulbs

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

## Circuit Breakers and Fuses

Circuit breakers and fuses should be the correct size 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 size fuse. Create a circuit map that clearly identifies all outlets, fixtures and the major appliances each circuit serves.

## Appliances

Make sure your appliances are all certified by an independent testing laboratory such as UL, CSA, ETL, or MET Labs, and read and follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully.

## 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 an independent testing laboratory such as UL, CSA, ETL or MET labs.

Space heaters are meant to supply supplemental heat. Keep space heaters at least 3 ft. away from any combustible material such as bedding, clothing, draperies, furniture and rugs. Don't use space heaters in rooms where children are unsupervised and remember to turn off and unplug when not in use. Plug space heaters directly into the outlet; **do not use an extension cord**. Use a circuit with as little else on it as possible; space heaters can take a lot of power.

Halogen floor lamps operate at much higher temperatures than a standard incandescent light bulb. Never place a halogen floor lamp where it could come in contact with draperies, clothing or other combustible materials. Be sure to turn the lamp off whenever you leave the room for an extended period of time and never use torchiere lamps in children's bedrooms or playrooms. Floor lamps that use cooler, more energy-efficient fluorescent bulbs are available.

Electric-powered mowers and other tools should not be used in the rain, on wet grass, or in wet conditions. Inspect power tools and electric lawn mowers before each use for frayed power cords, broken plugs, and cracked or broken housings. If damaged, stop using it immediately. Repair it or replace it. Be sure you have GFCI protection on all outdoor outlets; portable GFCIs are available from most hardware and home improvement stores. Always use an extension cord marked for outdoor use and rated for the power needs of your tools. Remember to unplug all portable power tools when not in use. When using ladders, watch out for overhead wires and power lines.

During an electrical storm, do not use appliances (i.e. hairdryers, toasters, radios) or telephones (except in an emergency). Do not take a bath or shower. Keep batteries on hand for flashlights and radios in case of a power outage. And use surge protectors on electronic devices and appliances. For areas with a high occurrence of lightning, consider installing a surge arrestor for whole house protection.

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. First turn off the power source at the panelboard and then unplug the appliance. If you have an appliance that has gotten wet, don't use it until it has been checked by a qualified repair person.

## Space Heaters



## Halogen Floor Lamps



## Outdoor Safety

## Remember—Water and Electricity Don't Mix