

Homes | Electrical safety

Stay plugged in and protected

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Do you know how to reduce electrical hazards in your home? Here are safety tips from CableOrganizer.com.

Always keep electrical appliances away from water and moisture. If you do drop an appliance in water, do not attempt to retrieve or unplug it. Go to your circuit box and shut off power to that circuit. Then the appliance can be unplugged and removed from the water. Once it has dried thoroughly, have an electrician determine whether it can be used again.

Listen to your appliances. If an appliance regularly trips a circuit breaker or gives you a shock, it's a sign something is wrong. Unplug the appliance and call an electrician.

Install Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs). These receptacles are a code requirement in new construction for electrical outlets near water. GFCIs detect current leakages (or ground faults) in electrical circuits, as might occur when an electrical device contacts water. The GFCI then shuts off power to that receptacle almost instantaneously, preventing electrical shock, burns and electrocution. If your home does not have GFCIs, have them installed.

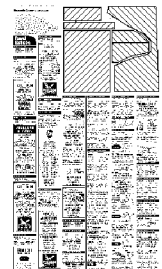
Use the right-size circuit breakers and fuses. If fuses and circuit breakers aren't the right size and wattage rating to match the specifications of their circuits, they'll fail when you need them most. If you're not sure which size to buy, have an electrician look at your panel box and label it with the circuit breaker or fuse size needed.

Protect your kids. Use outlet covers to prevent them from sticking their fingers and other objects into unoccupied receptacles, protecting them against shock and electrocution.

Avoid cube taps and other outlet-stretching devices. Cube taps – those little boxes that allow you to plug several appliances into a single outlet – may seem like a major convenience, but they can cause circuit overload, overheated wiring and even fire. If you absolutely must use one, do the math before plugging in. Know the maximum power demand that the cube-tapped receptacle can handle, and be certain that the collective pull (power requirement) of the devices you're plugging into it doesn't exceed that rating.

Replace missing or broken wall plates. They protect your fingers from contact with the electrical wiring behind the plates.

Consult the lamp's maximum wattage specifications (they're often printed right around the light



bulb socket). Choose a bulb with wattage that's equal to or less than the maximum wattage listed on the lamp.

Never nail or tightly tack them down, and regularly check to make sure that they're not pinched between or under furniture. Excessive pressure on power cables can damage insulation (exposing the conductor), or compress the conducting wire, which can lead to overheating and put you at risk for an electrical fire.

