

Eliminate Top Safety Threats To Prevent Electrical Injuries

(NAPSA)—Eliminating the top electrical safety hazards could help prevent 40,000 electrical fires and hundreds of injuries and deaths annually, according to the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI).

Data from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) indicates that the top electrical safety hazards include electrical fires caused by aging wiring and misuse of surge suppressors and electrocutions from wiring systems and large appliances.

“While many of these electrical hazards can be eliminated, we often fail to take steps to avoid injury,” Michael G. Clendenin, executive director of ESFI noted. Electrical safety tips include:

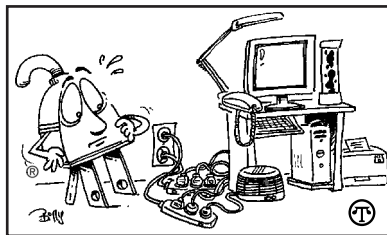
- Your appliances and equipment should be approved by an independent testing laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL), Canadian Standards Association (CSA) or ETL-SEMKO (ETL).

- Use appliances and equipment according to manufacturer’s instructions.

- Replace damaged electrical equipment or take it to an authorized repair center. Replace frayed cords, broken plugs or cracks, which are hazards; cut and throw out damaged cords.

- Use ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protection to avoid shock when working where water is near electricity, such as your kitchen, laundry room, bathroom or outdoors.

- When using a generator, plug



appliances directly into the generator or use a heavy duty outdoor-rated extension cord, free of cuts and tears, with a three-prong plug. Never plug the generator into a wall outlet, a dangerous practice known as backfeeding. If you must connect the generator to house wiring, have a qualified electrician install a power transfer switch in accordance with local electrical codes.

- Use licensed electrical inspectors to check wiring in homes over 40 years old or those with major renovations. Flickering or dimming lights can be signs of problems.

- Install a new electrical safety device—an arc fault circuit interrupter (AFCI)—to stop electrical arcs, which cause fires. Arcs are not detected by most breakers and fuses.

- Use power strips and surge suppressors designed to handle the loads for their intended use. Avoid overloading circuits by plugging too many items into one outlet.

For more electrical safety information, including ESFI’s *Indoor Electrical Safety Check* booklet, visit www.electrical-safety.org or call 703-841-3329.