

Fire Safety

Preventing Electrical Fires

(NAPSA)—Electrical failures and malfunctions are a leading cause of house fires year after year—but you can stay safe at home. Many electrical fires can be prevented simply by understanding basic electrical safety principles and following safe practices.

Keep Home Fires From Burning

To help you protect your home and family from electrical fires, the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) offers these tips:

- Safety should always be the top priority when working with electricity. ESFI recommends that a qualified, licensed electrician perform all home electrical work in compliance with local and national safety standards.

- Consider having your circuit breakers replaced with arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs), which provide enhanced electrical fire protection by detecting dangerous arcing conditions.

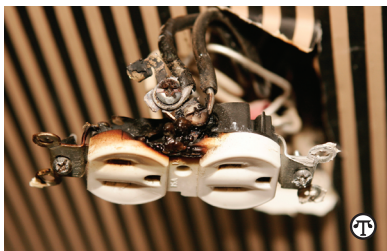
- Make sure all electrical panel circuits are properly labeled. Always replace fuses or circuit breakers with the correct size and amperage.

- Keep the area around the electrical panel clear so you can easily shut off power in an emergency.

- Every month, use the TEST button to check that ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) and AFCIs are working properly.

- Look for warning signs of an electrical problem, such as outlets and switches that are warm or make crackling, sizzling or buzzing noises.

- Regularly check cords, outlets, switches, and appliances for signs of damage. Do not use damaged electrical devices.



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Protecting your home and family from an electrical fire may be easier than you realize.

- Do not use extension cords on a permanent basis and never use them with space heaters or air conditioners.

- Avoid overloading outlets.

- Do not use lightbulbs that exceed the recommended wattage of the light fixture or lamp.

What to Do in Case of Fire

Despite your best prevention efforts, a fire could still happen. Follow these five tips to make sure your family is prepared to make a safe escape:

1. Install smoke alarms inside each bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of the house.

2. Test smoke alarms every month.

3. Create a family fire escape plan that includes two ways out of each room.

4. Pick an easy-to-find meeting place outside, a safe distance from your home.

5. Practice your escape plan by having at least two fire drills a year. Start one fire drill at night while your family is sleeping.

Learn More

Visit www.electrical-safety.org for more home electrical safety information.