SAFETY SENSE

Summer Safety Sense

(NAPSA)—Investing a little time and effort to prevent electrical hazards can mean increased safety and comfort this summer.

Air-conditioning fires occur more frequently than many realize. It's estimated that an average of 2,300 air-conditioning fires occur in residential structures each year and peak during the summer months.

According to the U.S. Fire Administration, 86 percent of these residential air-conditioning fires are ignited as a result of mechanical failure or malfunction, such as a short circuit.

To reduce the threat of an electrical fire, have a qualified, licensed electrician install and service any air-conditioning units in or around your home.

Electrical Safety Tips

To help you keep your cool, here are some tips from the Electrical Safety Foundation International on how to prevent cooling electrical hazards before they start:

- Have a qualified, licensed electrician install and service any air-conditioning units in or around your home.
- Be sure that both the electrical circuit and the electrical outlet can handle the air-conditioning unit load. Have a licensed electrician inspect your home's wiring and advise you as to whether it will safely handle air-conditioning units.
- Make sure your equipment has the label showing that it is listed by a recognized testing laboratory such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL), ETL SEMKO (ETL) or Canadian Standards Association (CSA).
- Look for breaks in power cords, plugs or connectors before plugging in and turning on equipment.
- Always plug an air conditioner into a grounded (three-pronged) outlet. If an appliance cord plug doesn't fit an outlet, have a qualified electrician replace the outlet.
- Avoid overloading outlets. Plug only one high-wattage appliance into each receptacle outlet at a time.

For more electrical safety tips, visit www.esfi.org.