Give Your Home an Electrical Safety Checkup

Just as regular wellness checkups are critical for maintaining your health, routine safety checkups are critical for the safety of your home. Use this checklist to ensure that you can identify and correct potential electrical hazards around your home before an electrical fire can result.

Switches and Outlets

1. Are all switches and outlets working properly?

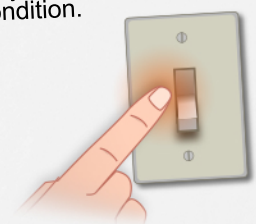
Improperly operating switches or outlets may indicate an unsafe wiring condition, which could be a fire hazard.

Rx 1.

Have a licensed electrician check these switches and outlets.

2. Are any switches or outlets warm to the touch?

Unusually warm switches or outlets may indicate an unsafe wiring condition.

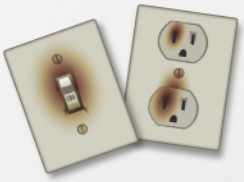


Rx 2.

Stop using these switches and outlets until they are checked by a licensed electrician.

3. Are any outlets or switches discolored?

Discoloration signifies a dangerous heat buildup at these connections.

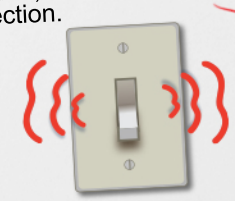


Rx 3.

Stop using these switches and outlets until they are checked by a licensed electrician.

4. Do any switches or outlets make crackling, buzzing, or sizzing sounds?

Unusual noises from a switch or outlet may indicate an unsafe wiring condition, such as a loose electrical connection.

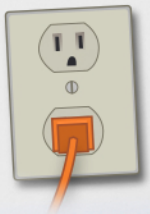


Rx 4.

Have a licensed electrician check these switches and outlets.

5. Do plugs fit snugly into all outlets?

Loose-fitting plugs can cause overheating and fires.



Rx 5.

Outlets without a snug fit should be replaced by a licensed electrician.

Cords

6. Is any cord cracked, frayed, or otherwise damaged?

NO YES

Damaged cords may have exposed wires that can be a fire and shock hazard

Rx 6.

Do not use damaged cords. Replace the cord or the equipment.

7. Are any cords pinched by furniture or in doors/windows?

NO YES

Pinching cords can cause damage to the insulation or break wire strands, creating a fire or shock hazard.

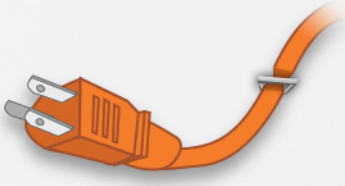
Rx 7.

Move furniture or relocate cords to prevent cord damage.

8. Are cords attached to anything with nails or staples?

NO YES

Nails and staples can cut or pinch insulation or break wire strands, presenting a fire or shock hazard.



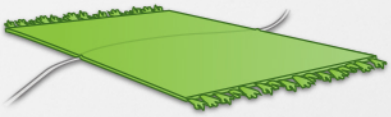
Rx 8.

Remove nails or staples. Check cord and replace if damaged.

9. Are cords placed under carpets?

NO YES

Cords can overheat if air cannot flow around them, creating a fire hazard.



Rx 9.

Move cords or carpets so the cords are not covered.

10. Do you use extension cords on a permanent basis?

NO YES

Extension cords are designed to be used only temporarily. Extended use may damage the cord, creating a fire and shock hazard.

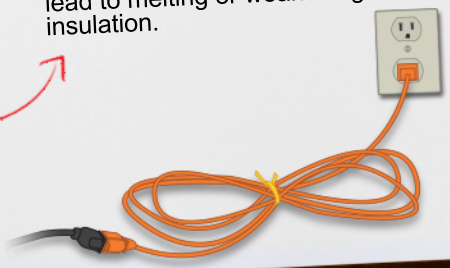
Rx 10.

Have a licensed electrician install new outlets where needed or move equipment closer to an outlet.

11. Are cords kept wrapped up while being used?

NO YES

Wrapped cords trap heat, which can lead to melting or weakening of the insulation.



Rx 11.

Unwrap cords.

Lamps and Appliances

12. Are you using the appropriate wattage light bulb in all lamps and light fixtures?

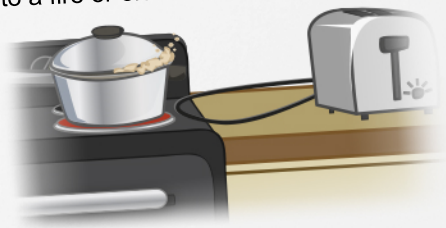
A bulb with a wattage higher than recommended may overheat the light fixture, wiring, or nearby combustible material, leading to a fire.

Rx 12.

Replace incorrect bulbs with bulbs of the proper wattage. Use bulbs of 60 watts or less if you are unsure of the appopriate wattage.

13. Are all appliance cords placed so they will not come in contact with hot surfaces?

Cords can melt or burn from excess heat. This can expose wires and lead to a fire or electric shock.



Rx 13.

Move cords away from all heat sources, such as heaters, ranges, and toasters.

Electrical Panel

14. Do you have recurring tripped circuit breakers or blown fuses?

Fuses and circuit breakers are safety devices that help prevent overloading of your home electrical system and prevent fires. They stop the electrical current if it exceeds the safe level for some portion of your home electrical system..

Rx 14.

Frequent blown fuses or tripped circuits can signify a serious electrical problem. Contact a licensed electrician immediately.

15. Are fuses or circuit breakers the correct size for the circuit?

The wrong size fuse or circuit breaker can cause the wiring to overheat, creating a fire hazard.

Rx 15.

Have a licensed electrician determine the correct sizes and install them.

16. Do you have arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs)?

AFCIs are advanced circuit breakers that provide greater electrical fire protection.

Rx 16.

Consider having a licensed electrician replace the standard circuit breakers with AFCIs.

17. If AFCIs are installed, do you test them every month?

AFCIs can stop working without showing signs of failure, so regular testing is necessary to ensure they are working properly.

Rx 17.

Test AFCIs monthly using the TEST button on the AFCI. Have a licensed electrician replace defective AFCIs.