

Electrical Safety

Business Dangers

Electrical fires are one of the leading types of homes/business fires, especially in manufactured businesses. By following some simple rules on electrical safety you can reduce the likelihood of an electrical fire in your business.

Prevent Electrical Problems

Studies of business fires in homes/businesses show that many problems are associated with improper installation of electrical devices by do-it-yourselfers. Common errors that can lead to fires include the use of improperly rated devices such as:

- ___ switches
- ___ receptacles
- ___ loose connections

at these devices. Both can lead to overheating and arcing that can start fires. Fires are still caused by people using the wrong size fuse or even putting a penny behind a fuse when they don't have a spare. These practices are very dangerous.

The fuse is a safety device designed to limit the electricity carried by the circuit to a safe level. Electricity and water are a bad connection. All electrical devices stored outdoors should be specially designed for outdoor use. Outdoor receptacles as well as those in:

- ___ kitchens
- ___ bathrooms
- ___ anywhere near water should be ground fault circuit interrupting type (GFCI).

Use Electrical Devices Safely

Light bulbs, especially the new halogen types, get very hot and can ignite combustible materials that get too close. Clothing or towels should never be placed atop a lampshade and table lamps should not be used without a shade where they might fall over onto a chair or sofa. Most light fixtures are labeled to show the brightest bulb that can be used in that fixture; too high a wattage bulb can cause the fixture to overheat and start a fire.

Extension cords are a common cause of electrical fires. You must be careful to use only extension cords that are rated for the power used by the device that they are powering. Extension cords should never be used as a long-term solution to the need for another receptacle. Extension cords must never be run:

- ___ inside walls
- ___ under rugs

____ or under furniture.

Extension cords can get warm in use and must be able to dissipate the heat or they can start a fire.

Maintain Electrical Safety

The insulation on electrical cords can become damaged by

____ wear
____ flexing
____ age.

Do not use any cord that is:

____ stiff
____ cracked.

Some clues that you may have an electrical problem are:

____ Flickering lights - If the lights dim every time you turn on an appliance that circuit is overloaded or has a loose connection.

____ Sparks - If sparks appear when you insert or remove a plug, they could be a sign of loose connections.

____ Warm electrical cord - If an electrical cord is warm to the touch, the cord is underrated or defective.

____ Frequent blown fuses or broken circuits - A fuse circuit breaker that keeps tripping is an important warning sign of problems.

____ Frequent bulb burnout - A light bulb that burns out frequently is a sign that the bulb is too high a wattage for the fixture.

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