

Electrical Safety

Electricity is our most mysterious form of energy. You can't see, hear or smell it. But, you sure can feel it.

Electricity seeks the easiest path to the ground, through the easiest available conductor such as metal, wet wood or water. And, since the human body is 70% water, it is considered a conductor as well--and a very good one at that! If a person touches an energized wire or faulty equipment while grounded, they will get a harmful, possibly deadly shock since the electricity passes through the body immediately upon connection.

Treat electricity with the respect it deserves. NEVER assume anything!

"Each year, there are 40,000 residential fires due to electrical wiring, claiming more than 350 lives, causing thousands of injuries from shocks and burns, creating \$2,000,000,000 in personal property damage. Electric receptacles are responsible for 40 deaths and 5,300 fires."¹

IF SOMEONE IS BEING SHOCKED WITH A HOUSEHOLD CURRENT:

- ✚ Don't touch the victim unless the power is off
- ✚ Unplug the appliance or turn off the power at the service panel
- ✚ If you can't turn off the power, use a dry wooden broom handle or dry clothing to separate the victim from the power source
- ✚ Call 911 or get emergency medical assistance
- ✚ If the victim is not breathing, begin CPR
- ✚ If the victim is conscious, keep them calm, lay them on their back and elevate their legs. Cover them with a blanket.

SOMEONE IS BEING SHOCKED WITH AN OUTDOOR HIGH VOLTAGE LINE:

- ✚ Don't try to separate the victim from the power source
- ✚ Don't touch the victim unless you are absolutely certain the victim is not in contact with the electrical wire or hazard
- ✚ Call 911 or get emergency help and medical assistance

IF YOU HAVE AN ELECTRICAL FIRE:

- ✚ Unplug the burning or smoking appliance
- ✚ Get everyone out of the house at once
- ✚ If the fire is small, use a CO² or dry powder extinguisher. *Never* put water on an electrical fire.
- ✚ Dial 911 (or the appropriate fire department phone number). Never assume that you have gotten the fire totally out as it may have extended behind walls, cabinets or into other void spaces.

HERE ARE SOME ELECTRICAL SAFETY TIPS:

- ✚ Know where the main electric box is--and how to turn the power off both for an individual circuit as well as for the main breaker
- ✚ Never overload a circuit
- ✚ Use three-prong grounded cords for devices requiring grounding
- ✚ Never file or cut three-prong or polarized plugs to make them fit
- ✚ Never use frayed/cracked/damaged cords--have it fixed at once
- ✚ If you're constantly blowing a fuse or tripping a breaker, there is something wrong! Get it checked!
- ✚ Protect young fingers from receptacles--install plastic covers in the receptacles and teach them not to stick objects or fingers into the receptacles
- ✚ Install ground fault circuit interrupter circuits (GFCI's) in bathrooms, kitchens, and outdoor outlets. Be sure they are tested regularly
- ✚ Never replace a blown fuse with anything other than a fuse with the SAME rating
- ✚ Dry your hands before touching a switch, plug, or receptacle. Do not use appliances while standing in water
- ✚ Do not run extension cords under rugs/carpeting
- ✚ Don't overload a receptacle with too many appliances
- ✚ Be sure the receptacle can handle the amperage being plugged in
- ✚ Be sure that the branch circuit can handle the amperage being used by all receptacles on the branch
- ✚ Unplug all counter-top appliances when not in use. When plugged in, they appliances still have dangerous electrical voltages inside of them--even when they're turned off
- ✚ Keep appliances & their cords away from water.
- ✚ If an appliance falls into water, don't retrieve it until you've unplugged it. Don't use the product again until you've had it inspected and repaired by an authorized repairperson
- ✚ Receptacles should be covered with a child-proof fitting.
- ✚ Only use light bulbs at or below the wattage specified by the manufacturer for the given lamp or light fixture.

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*Town of Menasha Fire Department
Public Education: Our first line of defense*