



Home Safety Checklist

These easy steps will help you to identify and correct fire and other electrical dangers commonly found in homes.

Step 1: Check Smoke Alarms. Nearly two-thirds of home fire deaths result from fires in homes with no working smoke alarms.

- ❑ Are there smoke alarms installed in your home?
- ❑ Do you have enough smoke alarms and are they installed in the proper locations? Smoke alarms should be located on every level of the home, inside each bedroom and outside each sleeping area.
- ❑ Are they working? Test smoke alarms every month.
- ❑ Do the batteries need to be replaced? Smoke alarm batteries should be replaced at least once a year – or sooner if indicated in the manufacturers' instructions.
- ❑ Are they more than 10 years old? All smoke alarms should be replaced at least every 10 years – or sooner if indicated in the manufacturers' instructions.

Step 2: Check the wattage of all light bulbs.

- ❑ Does the wattage of the bulb match the wattage indicated on the light fixture? Overheating can lead to a fire if the wattage of the bulb is greater than indicated on the fixture.

Step 3: Check all lamp, appliance and extension cords. Shock or fire hazards can result from damaged cords or improper use.

- ❑ Are cords in good condition (not damaged or cracked)? Do not attempt to repair damaged cords yourself. Take any item with a damaged power cord to an authorized repair center.
- ❑ Are extension cords being used only on a temporary basis? Extension cords should not be used to provide power on a long-term or permanent basis. Have additional receptacles installed to provide power where needed.
- ❑ Are your extension cords properly rated for their intended use, indoor or outdoor? Do they meet or exceed the power needs of the appliance or tool being used?

Step 4: Check wall outlets and light switches.

- ❑ Are all outlets and switches cool to the touch? Unusually warm outlets or switches may indicate that an unsafe wiring condition exists.
- ❑ Do you hear crackling, sizzling, or buzzing from your outlets? Call a licensed electrician to identify the cause.
- ❑ Do you have small children? Consider installing tamper-resistant receptacles to prevent hairpins and other small objects from being inserted into the outlet.

Step 5: Check portable heaters.

- ❑ Are heaters placed at least three feet away from things that can catch fire, such as curtains and bedding? Relocate heaters at least three feet away from all flammable materials.
- ❑ Are heaters placed on a flat, stable surface and placed where they will not be tipped over? Heaters should not be placed on top of furniture, or in high traffic areas. They may become a fire hazard if tipped over.
- ❑ Do you turn your space heaters off and unplug them when you leave the room or go to sleep? Space heaters should never be left unattended when they are in use.

Kitchen

Step 6: Check all countertop appliances.

- ❑ Are all appliance cords placed away from hot surfaces? Pay particular attention to cords around toasters, ovens, and ranges. Cords can be damaged by excess heat.
- ❑ Are all appliances located away from the sink? Electrical appliances can cause a shock if they come into contact with water.
- ❑ Are all kitchen appliances plugged into GFCI-protected outlets? GFCI outlets can help protect you from deadly electric shocks.

Step 7: Check all large appliances.

- ❑ Have you ever received even a slight shock (other than one from static electricity) from any of your large appliances? If so, do not use or touch the appliance until it has been checked by a licensed electrician.
- ❑ Are the top and the area above the cooking range free of combustibles like potholders and plastic utensils? Storing these things on or near the range may result in fires or burns.

Step 8: Check for Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters, or GFCIs.

- ❑ Are the kitchen and bathroom outlets protected by GFCIs? GFCIs should be installed in kitchens, bathrooms, and other areas where water may come into contact with electricity.
- ❑ If you have GFCIs installed, do you test them regularly? GFCIs must be operating properly to protect against electrocution. Test GFCIs monthly to ensure they are in working condition.

Garage/Basement

Step 9: Check your electrical service panel. Every home has a service panel that is equipped with fuses or circuit breakers that protect against overloads and fires.

- ❑ Is your fuse box or circuit breaker box appropriately labeled? Proper labeling makes it easy to identify what circuits power each room in your home.
- ❑ Are you regularly resetting tripped circuit breakers? Circuit breakers that are constantly tripping indicate that the circuit is overloaded or that other electrical hazards exist. Consult a qualified, licensed electrician.
- ❑ Is your home protected by Arc Fault Circuit Interrupters (AFCIs)? Combination-type AFCIs replace traditional circuit breakers in the electrical service panel, providing the most advanced electrical fire protection available. Ask a qualified electrician if your home would benefit from AFCI protection. Test AFCIs monthly to make sure they are working properly.

Bathroom

Step 10: Check Small Electrical/Personal Use Appliances

- ❑ Are small appliances, such as hair dryers and electric razors plugged in when not in use? Water and electricity do not mix! Unplug and store appliances safely when not in use.
- ❑ Are they in good condition? Pay particular attention to erratic operation and damaged wiring or other parts.
- ❑ If you have any GFCIs, do you test them regularly? GFCIs must be operating properly to protect against electrocution.

Visit www.electrical-safety.org to learn more about ESFI and electrical safety.