

# Electrical Fire Safety Checklist

Electrical fires **do not** have to happen. Use this checklist to help you find and fix electrical fire hazards in your home before they can start a fire.

## Smoke Alarms

- ☐ Do you have smoke alarms in all the right locations?

**NO or I DON'T KNOW:** Install smoke alarms on each level of the home, outside each sleeping area, and inside each bedroom.

Smoke alarms save lives. Nearly two-thirds of home fire deaths occur in homes without working smoke alarms.

- ☐ Do you test them once a month?

**NO:** Test smoke alarms once a month by pressing the TEST button.

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

- ☐ Have you changed the batteries this year?

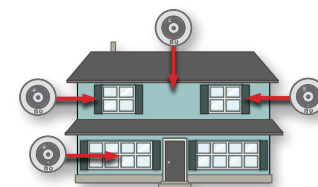
**NO:** Replace batteries at least once a year or sooner if they begin to "chirp."

When batteries run down, the smoke alarm will not sound.

- ☐ Do you know how old the alarms are?

**NO:** Smoke alarms should be replaced at least every 10 years. Replace alarms if you are unsure of their age.

The components inside smoke alarms can wear out over time, which could affect their operation.



## Switches and Outlets

- ☐ Are all the switches and outlets working properly?

**NO:** Have a licensed electrician check these switches and outlets.

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

- ☐ Are any switches or outlets warm to the touch?

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

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

- ☐ Do any switches or outlets make crackling, buzzing, or sizzling sounds?

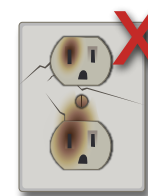
**YES:** Have a licensed electrician check these switches and outlets.

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

- ☐ Do plugs fit snugly into all outlets?

**NO:** Outlets without a snug fit should be replaced by a licensed electrician.

Loose-fitting plugs can cause overheating and fires.

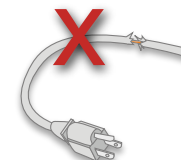


Visit ESFI's website at [www.electrical-safety.org](http://www.electrical-safety.org) for more electrical and home fire safety information.

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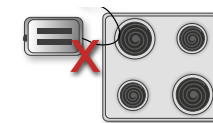
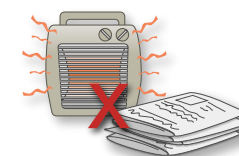
## ☒ Cords

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Is any cord cracked, frayed, or otherwise damaged?      | <b>YES:</b> Do not use damaged cords. Replace the cord or the equipment.  | Damaged cords may have exposed wires that can be a fire and shock hazard.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Are any cords pinched by furniture or in doors/windows? | <b>YES:</b> Move furniture or relocate cords to prevent cord damage.  | Pinching cords can cause damage to the insulation or break wire strands, creating a fire or shock hazard.                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Are cords attached to anything with nails or staples?   | <b>YES:</b> Remove nails or staples. Check cord and replace if damaged.   | Nails and staples can cut or pinch insulation or break wire strands, presenting a fire or shock hazard.                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Are cords located under carpets or rugs?                | <b>YES:</b> Move cords or carpets so the cords are not covered.   | Cords can overheat if air cannot flow around them, creating a fire hazard.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do you use extension cords on a permanent basis?        | <b>YES:</b> Have a licensed electrician install new outlets where needed or move equipment closer to an outlet. | Extension cords are designed to be used only temporarily. Extended use may damage the cord, creating a fire and shock hazard. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Are cords kept wrapped up while being used?             | <b>YES:</b> Unwrap cords.   | Wrapped cords trap heat, which can lead to melting or weakening of the insulation.  |



## ☒ Lamps and Appliances

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Are you using the appropriate wattage light bulb in all lamps and light fixtures?    | <b>NO or I DON'T KNOW:</b> Replace incorrect bulbs with bulbs of the proper wattage. Use bulbs of 60 watts or less if you are unsure of the appropriate wattage. | A bulb with a wattage higher than recommended may overheat the light fixture, wiring or nearby combustible material, leading to a fire. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Are portable electric heaters kept at least 3 feet away from anything that can burn? | <b>NO:</b> Move heater at least 3 feet away from combustible material, such as curtains, bedding, and newspapers.  | Some heaters can produce enough heat to ignite nearby combustible materials.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Are all appliance cords placed so they will not come in contact with hot surfaces?   | <b>NO:</b> Move cords away from all heat sources, such as heaters, range, and toaster.   | Cords can melt or burn from excess heat. This can expose wires and lead to a fire or electric shock.                                    |

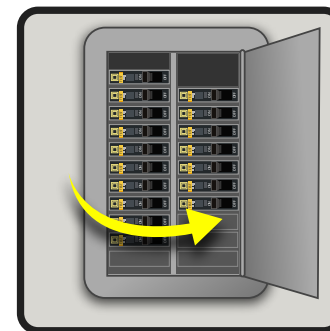


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## ☒ Electrical Panel

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Are fuses or circuit breakers the correct size for the circuit? | <b>NO or I DON'T KNOW:</b> Have a licensed electrician determine the correct sizes and install them.                  | The wrong size fuse or circuit breaker can cause the wiring to overheat, creating a fire hazard.                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do you have arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs)?             | <b>NO.</b> Consider having a licensed electrician replace the standard circuit breakers with AFCIs.                   | AFCIs are advanced circuit breakers that provide greater electrical fire protection.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> If AFCIs are installed, do you test them every month?           | <b>NO.</b> Test AFCIs monthly using the TEST button on the AFCI. Have a licensed electrician replace defective AFCIs. | AFCIs can stop working without showing signs of failure, so regular testing is necessary to ensure they are working properly. |



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