



IMMEDIATE

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ESFI Urges Consumers to Be “In the Know” About Electrical Safety

ARLINGTON, VA -- Do you have any idea what those buttons on your bathroom’s electrical outlet are for? Would you know if your home’s circuits were overloaded?

May is National Electrical Safety Month, and the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) urges you to use this month to learn the answers to these and other questions about your home’s electrical system.

According to the Consumer Protection Safety Commission (CPSC), there was an annual average of 104,500 (unintentional, electrical, residential structure) fires from 1999-2003, which resulted in about 500 deaths, 4,280 injuries, and nearly \$1.5 billion in property loss. CPSC’s latest data (2003) indicate that there were an estimated 160 electrocutions related to consumer products.

“Knowledge can save your life,” said ESFI President Brett C. Brenner. “If you know the signs of an overloaded electrical circuit or how to test a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) outlet, you can prevent electrocution or electrical fires.”

During National Electrical Safety Month, ESFI recommends that consumers focus on a different electrical safety issue each week.

May 6 through 12: Use ESFI’s Indoor Electrical Safety Checklist to evaluate the electrical systems inside your home. Make it a contest: see who can identify the most opportunities to improve your home’s electrical safety.

May 13 through 19: Use ESFI’s Outdoor Electrical Safety Checklist to ensure that you Look Up! Look Down! Look Out for Safety! And remember to call 811 before you dig to prevent electrocution from underground power lines.

May 20 through 26: If your window air conditioning unit is connected by extension cords to the other side of the room, it’s time to talk about safe use of extension cords. Download ESFI’s brochure, [Use Extension Cords Safely](#).

May 27 through 30: Electrical safety begins in the home, but it shouldn’t end there! If your power strip looks like a bowl of spaghetti, you’re putting yourself - and your co-workers - at risk of electric shock or electrical fire. During the final week of National Electrical Safety Month, perform an electrical safety inspection of your office.

Taking these simple safety precautions could prevent you from being one of the thousands of people injured or even killed by preventable electrical hazards each year.

For more information about electrical safety, go to www.electrical-safety.org.

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Founded in 1994 through a joint effort between Underwriters Laboratories Inc. (UL), the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and the National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA), the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) is North America's only non-profit organization dedicated exclusively to promoting electrical safety in the home and workplace. ESFI is a 501(c)(3) organization funded by electrical manufacturers and distributors, independent testing laboratories, utilities, safety and consumer groups, and trade and labor associations. ESFI sponsors National Electrical Safety Month each May, and engages in public education campaigns and proactive media relations to help reduce property damage, personal injury and death due to electrical accidents. The Foundation does not engage in code or standard writing or lobbying and does not solicit individuals.

For additional electrical safety information, visit the Foundation's Web site at www.electrical-safety.org or call 703-841-3229.