



Outdoor Safety Tips

These hints from the experts at the Electrical Safety Foundation International may help you stay safe around outdoor electrical equipment.

Lawn mowers, hedge trimmers, and other outdoor electrical tools

- Protect yourself from injury. Turn the tool off, unplug it and put it in the “lock” position when carrying or connecting attachments such as mower baskets or saw blades.
- When ready for use, don’t leave electric tools unattended. Be sure to put the appliance where no curious child or unqualified adult can misuse it.
- Store the equipment indoors to keep them protected from damage caused by water and excessive heat.
- If an electrical products falls into a pool or pond, unplug it before you reach into the water.
- Safely store warm weather tools like lawn mowers and trimmers. Check cold weather tools, such as leaf and snow blowers, along with their power cords, for unusual wear and tear. Repair or replace worn tools or parts right away.

Personal protective equipment. You may survive, but will your eyes, ears and hands make it.

- Safeguards on outdoor electric tools are there for a reason. Make sure that they are always in place before operating.
- Invest in the safety goggles, hearing protection, dust masks, gloves and other safety gear as recommended for each tool. A few dollars now are well worth the lifetime of good sight and hearing that they are protecting.
- Wear the appropriate clothes for the job. Wearing sandals while mowing the lawn is just asking for trouble.

Extension cords – you are only as safe as they are

- When working outdoors, use only weather-resistant heavy gauge extension cords marked “for outdoor use.” These weather resistant cords have the added safeguard of a protective coating designed to withstand the rougher outdoor environment and to prevent water from seeping in.
- Be sure amperage ratings for outdoor extension cords are higher than those of the electrical product with which they are used.
- Keep cords out of your path or work area. Throw the cord over your shoulder.
- Be sure to examine cords before each use. Damaged cords should be replaced immediately.
- Remember that extension cords are for short term needs and not for long term power solutions. Never alter or tamper with an extension cord in anyway.

Outdoor outlets

- A GFCI is a type of outlet which automatically disconnects power when a plugged in electrical tool comes in contact with water or begins to “leak” electricity. It is a life-saver; not a luxury.
- The National Electric Code now requires GFCIs in bathrooms, garages, kitchens and outdoor outlets.
- Protect outlets from the elements by making sure that they are covered when not in use.
- Keep outdoor outlets and electrical products covered and dry between uses.
- Keep dry leaves swept away from outdoor lighting, outlets and power cords.

Power lines – If you don’t check, you might be SHOCKED by what you find.

- Before you place a ladder or trim a branch, check the area to ensure that it might not accidentally come in contact with overhead power lines.
- Remember that power lines are underground as well. Before you dig to plant a tree or put in a fence, call 811 to have them come and mark all of the utility lines.

Generators

- A qualified, licensed electrician should install your generator to ensure that it meets local electrical codes.
- Do not operate the generator in enclosed or partially enclosed spaces. Generators can produce deadly levels of carbon dioxide very quickly.
- Use outdoor-rated extension cords, and make sure that the number of appliances plugged into the generator does not exceed its capacity.