



# Burn Prevention: Electrical Safety

Flipping a light switch. Plugging in a coffee maker. Charging a laptop computer. These are second nature for most of us. Electricity makes our lives easier. However, we need to be cautious and keep safety in mind.

## Important Reminder

Call a qualified electrician or your landlord if you experience any of the following:

- Frequent problems with blown fuses or tripped circuit breakers
- A tingling feeling when you touch an electrical appliance
- Discolored or warm wall outlets
- A burning or rubbery smell coming from an appliance
- Flickering or dimming lights
- Sparks from an outlet

Source: [nfpa.org/education](https://www.nfpa.org/education)

## Safety Tips

- Have all electrical work done by a qualified electrician.
- When you are buying or remodeling a home, have it inspected by a qualified private inspector or in accordance with local requirements.
- Use only one heat-producing appliance (such as a coffee maker, toaster, space heater, etc.) plugged into the same outlet at one time.
- Major appliances (refrigerators, dryers, washers, stoves, air conditioners, microwave ovens, etc.) should be plugged directly into a wall outlet. Extension cords and power strips should not be used.
- Arc-fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) shut off electricity when a dangerous condition occurs. Consider having them installed in your home.
- Use ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) to reduce the risk of shock. GFCIs shut off an electrical circuit when it becomes a shock hazard. They should be installed inside the home in bathrooms, kitchens, garages and basements. All outdoor receptacles should be GFCI protected.
- Test AFCIs and GFCIs once per month according to the manufacturer's recommendations.
- You do not need a flame to start a fire. Fires can start when heat builds up near things that burn. This can happen when a hot lightbulb is near things that burn, such as cloth or paper, or when a cord is placed under a carpet.
- Check electrical cords to make sure they are not running across doorways or under carpets. Extension cords are intended for temporary use. Have a qualified electrician add more outlets so you don't have to use extension cords.
- Use a lightbulb with the right number of watts. A lamp or light fixture should have a sticker that indicates the right wattage.

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