

Basic Electrical Safety

You don't need to be an electrician or work in construction to be concerned about electrical safety. According to the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI), there are an estimated 1,000 deaths per year due to electrical injuries in addition to 30,000 non-fatal shock injuries. Electricity is part of our everyday life, and everyone from landscapers to office workers should have general knowledge of the hazards electricity poses and how to safely avoid them.

Electrical Hazards

- Contact with power lines
- Contact with damaged electrical equipment
- Improper wiring, or loose connectors
- Overloading of circuits
- Unsafe work practices

Electrocution occurs when electrical energy connects with your body. Our bodies are excellent conductors for electricity, and if you become shocked your body becomes part of the electrical pathway.

Common Electrical Injuries

- Muscle, nerve and tissue damage
- Cardiac arrest or respiratory failure
- Burns from arc flash or arc blast
- Thermal burns from contact with sources of electricity
- Secondary injuries, such as falling after being shocked

Perform monthly inspections of your equipment and electrical boxes. Look for any loose fittings, damaged covers, exposed wires, or any areas water may be seeping in. Have a licensed electrician inspect your electric system annually to be sure it's running properly and appropriate for the amount of power you need.

Basics of Electrical Safety

- Ensure all electrical equipment is plugged in properly, grounded and in good condition
- Extension cords should only be used for temporary needs. Never use an extension cord for permanent wiring
- Equipment with high amperage, such as air conditioners, should always be plugged directly into a permanent wall receptacle
- Don't drape electrical cords over hot items like radiators or hot pipes
- Always keep at least 36 inches of clearance around all electrical panels
- Junction boxes should always be covered
- Do not try to repair or modify any existing electrical equipment. Always call a licensed electrician

- When using electricity in a wet environment be sure to use a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI). These monitor the amount of current flowing through the appliance and if there is any imbalance it will trip the circuit and shut it off

- If you need to repair or service equipment that uses electricity always use Lockout/Tagout procedures to ensure the equipment isn't accidentally turned on while you're using it



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