

Electrical safety for you and me – Tips to keep your home safe from electrical hazards

We use a variety of electrical appliances in our everyday lives, such as when we clean or cook. However, we may not be aware of the various hazards that may surface when electrical appliances are not handled properly. Overlooking basic electrical safety practices can lead to accidents, injuries, fires, and even deaths. Keep the following tips in mind to safeguard your family from electrical hazards.

General Electrical Safety Tips

- Everyday items such as microwave ovens, decorative lighting chains, coffeemakers, kettles and irons are just some of the **33 categories of Controlled Goods** under the **Consumer Protection (Safety Requirements) Registration Scheme**, and are required to carry the **SAFETY Mark**.
- Ensure that your electrical appliance is first switched off, before unplugging it from the mains.
- When connecting or disconnecting the electrical appliance, hold the plug instead of the cord to prevent damage to the cord, which could expose you to live wires.
- If your appliance has damaged or frayed cords, stop using it immediately and get the cord replaced.
- Overloading power sockets can easily cause fire hazards. The socket-outlet can start overheating and catch fire if too many appliances draw power from it. Manage your appliances by using portable socket-outlets. Alternatively, consider installing additional wall socket-outlets in your home.
- Always engage a licensed electrical worker (LEW) to perform all electrical installation, maintenance and repair work and ask to see the worker's licence.
- Keep liquids away from your appliances and wall or portable socket-outlets to prevent short circuits. Do not handle electrical appliances with wet hands.
- Keep appliances such as decorative lighting chains, kettles and irons out of the reach of children.

A Closer Look at Some Common Household Products

Microwave Ovens

- Set cooking times correctly to prevent food from overheating and catching fire and never leave them unattended when in use.
- Check the instruction manual for precautions and recommendations on the proper usage of microwave ovens. For example, do not heat water or other liquids for too long and refrain from cooking nuts and eggs in shells as they may explode.

Decorative Lighting Chains

- Switch decorative lights off when there is no one home in case of a short circuit, which may result in a fire.
- Do not handle such lighting fixtures with wet hands or use them in wet areas to prevent electric shocks.

Coffeemakers, Kettles

- Ensure the lid is securely closed while the appliance is in use to prevent hot liquid from scalding you or your family members.
- Never leave such appliances unattended when in use.
- Ensure that the surrounding area is kept dry, and that cords are kept neat to avoid accidents such as tipping over the coffeemaker or kettle and spilling its hot contents.

Irons

- Use an iron only for its intended purpose, and never leave an iron unattended while it is connected to the mains supply.
- Always disconnect a steam iron from the mains before refilling the container with water.