

# Homeowner's Guide to Keeping Your House Electrically Safe

## FIRSTLY:

- Have a PowerCheck electrical check-up of your home. PowerCheck will look for any electrical dangers that may be present.
- Get the identified hazards corrected by a Licensed Electrical Contractor. This will bring your house to PowerCheck's "Medium Risk" rating.
- For your added safety, bring your house to PowerCheck's "Low Risk" rating. This includes installation of hard-wired smoke alarms.



## THEN:

### *Extension cords and power bars*

- Don't put extension cords under the rug or through passageways. The insulation on the cord can easily deteriorate. If the insulation breaks down a fire can occur.
- Don't staple extension cords to the wall. The metal staple can easily cut through the cord's insulation resulting in sparks and fire.
- Don't overload your extension cords or power bars. Standard light-duty indoor extension cords are designed for low power applications, such as a lights, a telephone or a portable fan. If more power is required, for example a portable heater, desktop computer, or A/V system, be sure to use an approved heavy gauge extension cord or power bar designed to handle the high current needs.

### *Christmas lights*

- Don't secure outdoor Christmas lights with metal staples. The metal staples can easily cut through the insulation resulting in sparks and fire. Approved Christmas light hangers are readily available at most hardware stores.

### *Electric heaters*

- Be sure to keep flammable materials (such as drapes, bedding, furniture) away from electric heaters. Electric heaters require clearance. Check manufacture instructions for details. Common baseboard heaters require 6" (15 cm) vertical and horizontal clearance.
- Be sure to switch off all your portable space heaters when sleeping. If a portable space heater was to tip over in the night a fire can easily occur.

### *Lighting*

- Keep flammable material well away from hot light bulbs. Pay particular attention to children's rooms. It is not uncommon for children to cover a lamp bulb with a cloth, which can result in a fire.

### *CSA approved*

- All your appliances must have a mark or label that they are approved for use in Canada. The two common approval stamps used in Canada are "CSA" or "ULC". Check to make sure your electrical appliances are marked with an approval stamp. If unsure, ask an electrician.

### *Smoke alarms*

- Make sure your smoke alarms are operating correctly. Smoke alarms save lives. If you do not have smoke alarms installed in your home, get them installed now. Check with your electrician for correct installation.

### *New electrical installations*

- Be sure your contractor takes out a permit. Nearly all new electrical installation work in BC must be done under electrical permit. Details are presented in the BC Electrical Safety Regulation at: [https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/12\\_100\\_2004#section18](https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/12_100_2004#section18)
- To find a licensed electrical contractor in BC, a list of all Licensed Electrical Contractors is published by Technical Safety BC at: <https://legacy.technicalsafetymc.ca/regulatory-resources/find-licensed-contractor>