



From Milwaukee Department of Neighborhood Services

# HomeSAFE Series

# First Topic:

Things to think about *to stay happy, safe and comfortable*

## ELECTRICAL HAZARDS

- Learn Do's and Don'ts, and who to call
- Learn to recognize trouble
- Checklist provided of things you never even considered unsafe
- An Electrical Inspector present to answer your questions

### Extension Cord Safety Tips

Roughly 3,300 home fires originate in extension cords each year. Extension cords can overheat and cause fires when used improperly, so keep these important tips in mind to protect your home and loved ones.

- Never plug an extension cord into another extension cord.
- Make sure extension cords are properly rated for their intended use. Indoor or outdoor. Never use an indoor extension cord outdoors.

#### Extension Cord Designations

|                                  |   |                                    |
|----------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| S: Designed for General Use      | W: Rated for Outdoor Use  | J: Standard 300 Voltage Insulation |
| T: Made from Vinyl Thermoplastic | P: Parallel Wire Construction (Air Conditioner Cords and Household Extension Cords) |                                    |
| O: Oil-Resistant                 | E: Made from TPE  |                                    |

**SJTW** **SJTW**

- Never use three-prong plugs with outlets that only have two slots. Trim and pull off the ground pin to force a fit, which could lead to electric shock.
- Only use extension cords that have been approved by an independent testing laboratory, such as the ones listed above.

#### Cord Length and Amperage Limits

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| 25 - 50 Feet Extension Cords | 18 Gauge (1 - 5 Amps)<br>14 Gauge (14 - 15 Amps)<br>12 - 10 Gauge (10-20 Amps)                        |
| 100 Feet Extension Cords     | 16 Gauge (1 - 10 Amps)<br>14 Gauge (14 - 15 Amps)<br>12 Gauge (14 - 15 Amps)<br>10 Gauge (16-20 Amps) |
| 150 Feet Extension Cords     | 14 Gauge (1 - 7 Amps)<br>12 Gauge (8 - 10 Amps)<br>10 Gauge (11-15 Amps)                              |

- Always use GFCI protection when using an extension cord outdoors.
- Inspect cords for damage before use. Check for frayed or frayed outlets, loose or loose wires, and loose connections. Discard damaged extension cords.

Extension cords are for temporary use only. A heavy reliance on extension cords is an indication that you have too few outlets to address your needs. Have additional outlets installed where you need them.

## Home Safety Checklist

Home emergencies and tragedies don't happen by coincidence or

because of bad luck, they happen: *When they are given an op-por-tun-ity.* Think about that for a second...now stack the deck in your favor with these practical tips from Milwaukee Department of Neighborhood Services, and eliminate those opportunities.

The following tips are simple and inexpensive (or free) but will greatly enhance your safety, and are good things to keep in mind as you travel along the road of life. It is always the right time to eliminate hazards and learn what you may have been overlooking. This list has some of the most common mistakes.

### **1. Beware of Old and/or Defective Wiring**

- Electrical wires can deteriorate over time, and may no longer meet safety standards (do not overload)
- Be on the lookout for loose connections (lights & outlets that flicker or spark)

### **2. Be Careful With Extension Cords and Powerstrips**

- THESE SHOULD **NOT** BE USED ON A PERMANENT BASIS
- Cords should also NOT run through walls or doorways (they can fray)
- Overloading outlets or power strips can cause a fire



### **3. Replace or Repair Old Appliances and Cords**

- Beware of brittle or damaged cords and plugs (exposed wires)
- Smartphone, tablet and laptop cords take a lot of abuse/damage

### **4. Beware of Children and Appliances** Children are often unaware of dangers, so make sure to:

- Take measures to prevent them from placing fingers or objects in outlets (remove clutter, use outlet protectors)
- Do not leave items that can be pulled down, and cause damage or injury (irons, other appliances with cords hanging)

### **5. Avoid Do-It-Yourself Fixes**

- Do NOT overfuse (DO NOT put a 20A fuse in a 15A space)
- Exposed wires or boxes are signs of unqualified installation (open junction boxes, service panels or connections)
- Electrical wiring should ONLY be installed by a qualified electrician

### **6. Be Careful around Water**

- Injury or death can occur when electrical appliances are used too close to water (sink, bathtub)
- Standing in a puddle or operating electrical items with wet hands can also be hazardous

### **7. Carelessness Can Kill**

- Making some repairs on your own can result in fire, injury or death



# Upcoming HomeSAFE Topics

- Plumbing hazards
- Neighborhood Pests and You
- Illegal Dumping
- Building Construction – Roofs, Foundations and More!
- Fire Hazards and Fire Protection
- Using the Land Management System (LMS)

# How Will They Know?

- *Clarke Square Neighborhood Initiative*
- *We Got This*
- *Near Westside Partners*
- *Safe and Sound*
- *Riverworks (Harambee & Riverwest)*
- *Reclaiming Our Neighborhoods*
- *BID's*
- *MPS*
- *Community Navigators*

# Our Community Partners