



Close Up the Cottage Safely this Weekend!

Ontario's Electrical Safety Authority offers electrical safety tips to protect you and your cottage

Mississauga, ON / October 9, 2013 – As the leaves fall to the ground and another cottage season comes to an end, many Ontarians will be heading to the cottage for the last long weekend before winter. The Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) is calling on cottagers to think about electrical safety when closing up for the season. Following these simple precautions now will help protect your cottage investment over the winter months. These tips will also keep you safe when you power back up next spring, and save you time and money, too.

Powering down

If you choose to shut your cottage's power off completely, follow these three steps to power down safely:

- Before shutting off the main electrical switch, first switch off the branch circuit breakers or fuses. Switching these off first will help protect major (and critical) appliances, such as your pump, hot water tank and electrical space heaters. Avoiding damage to important appliances will save you headaches when you re-open in the spring.
- Prevent extension cord damage caused by rodents by storing your electrical cords in rodent-proof containers, or consider storing them at home. Don't leave extension cords outside or anywhere exposed to freezing temperatures which may cause them to crack. Plugging in damaged cords in the spring may pose a risk of shock or fire.
- Large trees are common on cottage property and it's important to ensure their branches aren't growing too close to overhead powerlines. Trees can damage overhead powerlines, especially in winter when branches hang lower under the weight of heavy snow. If there's tree trimming to be done on your property, hire a trained arborist to remove any dangerous branches. Call your local utility company if they own the pole and powerlines.

Leave it on – safely!

If you plan to leave the power on over the winter, follow this advice to avoid any shocking surprises upon your return.

- Control the supply of power to major appliances, including your pump and hot water heater, by switching off breakers or removing fuses to any unused electrical equipment or circuits at your main panel. Take special care to unplug any space heaters that might turn on suddenly when the temperature drops, creating a fire hazard.
- For water systems that can't be completely drained, don't rely on space heaters in the pump pit. Unattended space heaters can cause a fire and destroy your property – it's not worth the risk.
- Consider a remote monitoring system to alert you to any flooding, freezing, or fire incidents. Many of these systems can also control exterior lighting and interior temperatures, for security and peace of mind.

Electrical safety may not be top-of-mind when rushing around to close a cottage for the season, but your summer property is an investment worth protecting. If you need to do any electrical work – inside or out – to winterize your cottage, hire a Licensed Electrical Contractor to get the job done safely, so that your family can enjoy getting away from it all for years to come.

The Electrical Safety Authority

The Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) is an administrative authority acting on behalf of the Government of Ontario with specific responsibilities under the *Electricity Act* and the *Safety and Consumer Statutes Administration Act*. As part of its mandate, ESA is responsible for administering regulation in four key areas: the Ontario Electrical Safety Code; licensing of Electrical Contractors and Master Electricians; electrical distribution safety; and electrical product safety.

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