Heavy Rains Across Ontario Increase Risk of Flooding: Water and Electricity Are a Lethal Mix

Electrical Safety Authority offers important information for flood-affected areas

Mississauga, ON – May 4, 2017. With flooding expected or already occurring in some regions of the province and a four-day forecast of heavy rains, the Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) warns Ontarians of a heightened risk of electric shock caused when water comes into contact with electricity. Following these important steps could save your life, or the lives of first responders and utility workers in your area.

Follow these four steps if your property has flooded:

1. Never assume the area affected by the flood is safe.
2. Stay out of your basement or property if you know or suspect water has risen above electrical outlets, baseboard heaters, furnace or near your electrical panel. Electricity can move through water or wet flooring and you could receive a serious shock.
3. If flood water has risen above outlets, baseboard heaters, furnace, covered power cords, or near the electrical panel, contact your local electric utility immediately and arrange for them to disconnect power to your home. Have your electrical system assessed and repaired by a Licensed Electrical Contractor. You can find a Licensed Electrical Contractor in your area using the search tool on esasafe.com.
4. **Do not** plug in or use electrical appliances that have come into contact with flood waters until the appliances have been checked or serviced by a Licensed Electrical Contractor or appliance service provider. Call a Licensed Electrical Contractor, or contact the manufacturer or dealer for the nearest service location.

Assessing the safety of your electrical system after a flood:

ESA strongly recommends you hire a Licensed Electrical Contractor to evaluate your home's electrical system to determine if it is safe.

- The contractor is required to take out an electrical permit with ESA so there is a record of the work;
- When the contractor completes the work, ESA will confirm work has been done according to the Ontario Electrical Safety Code and power can be reconnected;
- ESA will inform the utility that it is safe to reconnect your power; the utility will restore power when it is able to do so.
- After the work is done, ask the contractor for a copy of the ESA Certificate of Inspection for your records and insurance.

"With significant rainfall expected over the next few days, ESA wants to remind all Ontarians of the serious and potentially lethal consequences when water comes in contact with electricity," says Scott Saint, Chief Public Safety Officer, Electrical Safety Authority. "It is critical that you stay out of your basement or property if you know or suspect water has risen above the electrical outlets or near your electrical panel."

For more flood safety information or to find a Licensed Electrical Contractor in your area visit www.esasafe.com.

About the Electrical Safety Authority

The Electrical Safety Authority's (ESA's) role is to enhance public electrical safety in Ontario. As an administrative authority acting on behalf of the Government of Ontario, ESA is responsible for administering specific regulations related to the Ontario Electrical Safety Code, the licensing of Electrical Contractors and Master Electricians, electricity distribution system safety, and electrical product safety. ESA works extensively with stakeholders throughout the province on education, training and promotion to foster electrical safety across the province.

More information on the Electrical Safety Authority can be found at www.esasafe.com, through https://twitter.com/homeandsafety and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ElectricalSafetyAuthority.

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