

Put safety first at your summer celebration

The Electrical Safety Authority offers important safety information for Ontarians organizing special events this summer

Mississauga, ON – June 23, 2015 – Summer in Ontario is the perfect time for planned and impromptu outdoor gatherings, festivals, fairs, family celebrations and other special events. The Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) is reminding event organizers to make sure they're aware of electrical permit requirements for special events to avoid delays or disruptions that might spoil an otherwise flawless event plan.

Special requirements for large events

Larger events that include electrical equipment and large generators require an ESA electrical permit and an electrical inspection in addition to any permits required by local municipalities – it's the law! Plan ahead and arrange permits four to six weeks in advance of your event.

- Carnivals, festivals and traveling shows have specific electrical safety requirements. Event organizers should read ESA's guide at http://www.esasafe.com/assets/files/esasafe/pdf/Bulletins/ESA-Carnival_Brochure.pdf
- Midways, amusement devices, and food vendors that use generator power each require an ESA electrical permit. Organizers should obtain the ESA permit number from all vendors and operators and keep it on file at the site office.
- Download an ESA permit and inspection application form: http://www.esasafe.com/assets/files/esasafe/pdf/Entertainment_Industry_Application_F_or_Inspection.pdf

Electrical safety tips for celebrations large or small

Whether you're powering a public address system for speeches and music, setting up a large event tent, plugging in twinkle lights or using portable heaters after the sun sets, following these electrical safety tips will help you avoid an unfortunate accident that could otherwise spoil the fun.

- Event tents and decorations
 - Before moving and setting up a tent, always look up and look out for powerlines first! Remember, you don't have to touch the powerline to get a severe shock, burn or be electrocuted. Even coming too close could cause electricity to jump or 'arc' through the air to the tent pole or other equipment and seriously injure or even kill you.
 - When using a ladder to put up decorations, banners or lights always look up first for powerlines. Carry your ladder horizontally as you move around the yard or event location.
 - Stay at least three metres away from all powerlines that run along the street and at least one metre from the wires that run from your house to the electricity system.
- Portable generators
 - Size matters when it comes to portable generators – choose one that meets the needs of the equipment you want to power up.
 - An ESA inspection is not required for the type of generators that allow you to plug electrical equipment directly into outlets located on the generator.

- But generators larger than 12 kilowatts or 240 volts **do** require an electrical permit and ESA inspection. Call 1-877-ESA-SAFE (372-7233) at least a week in advance of your event.
 - Water and electricity don't mix! Set up your portable generator in a dry, well-ventilated area outdoors.
 - Generators produce poisonous carbon monoxide gas. Keep the generator away from your event tent, and also away from open doors, windows and vents of the house or other nearby buildings.
 - Gasoline and its vapors are extremely flammable. Allow the generator engine to cool at least two minutes before refueling and always use fresh gasoline.
- Extension cords
 - Choose the right extension cord for the job – use three-prong (grounded) cords rated for outdoor use.
 - Plug in safely – plug your extension cords into an outlet that's protected by a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) to prevent shocks. You can buy portable GFCI protected outdoor power bars at most home improvement retailers.
 - Extension cords are rated to deliver a specific amount of power – make sure the one you choose is rated for the amount of power your equipment needs.
 - Don't coil the cords – coiled extension cords can become very hot and potentially cause a fire.
 - Remember to secure cords to the ground to prevent tripping hazards or damage to the cord.
 - Look for the product certification mark on extension cords to make sure they've been safety tested approved for use in Ontario. Approval marks can be found at www.esasafe.com/electricalproducts/marks.
 - Outdoor heat and light
 - If you're using lights and heaters inside an event tent, remember to make sure they're kept well away from the tent fabric to avoid a fire – check the manufacturer's instructions for specific requirements.
 - Remember to choose products that are approved for where you're planning to use them – indoors, outdoors or wet locations.
 - Look for the product certification mark on lighting and heaters to make sure they've been safety tested and approved for use in Ontario. Approval marks can be found at www.esasafe.com/electricalproducts/marks.

For more information, visit www.esasafe.com.

About the Electrical Safety Authority (ESA)

The Electrical Safety Authority's (ESA) 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 Twitter @HomeandSafety and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ElectricalSafetyAuthority

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