



Protect yourself and your electronics

Back-to-school safety tips to protect students from electrical shock and fire

Mississauga, ON – August 28, 2012 – This fall, it's expected that more than 700,000 young men and women will go to university or college in Ontario. For thousands, this life-changing experience means moving away. As exciting as it is to settle into a place of your own, when hooking up computers, appliances, TVs, game consoles and other electronics, it pays to be safe. Students and parents who know the electrical hazards to look for and how to address them will start the school year with peace of mind.

When renting off-campus accommodations, the Electrical Safety Authority encourages students and parents to use this important electrical safety checklist so that the landlord can correct any potentially unsafe electrical situations before moving in, such as:

- ✓ Exposed electrical wiring
- ✓ Loose or damaged plugs and switches
- ✓ Dim, flickering or surging lights
- ✓ Outlets and switches with missing cover plates
- ✓ Fuses that blow or circuit breakers that frequently trip, or outlets that don't work when fuses are replaced or breakers reset
- ✓ Fuses and switches that are warm or hot to the touch – these should be turned off immediately and replaced by a licensed electrical contractor.

Even when accommodations are safeguarded, students still need to be vigilant about their own property like power cords, electronics and appliances. Protect yourself from injury and keep electronics running safely by taking a few simple precautions:

- ✓ Use only approved electrical products with the mark of a recognized certification agency¹.
- ✓ Choose power bars with a heavy-gauge cord that are approved by a recognized certification agency.
- ✓ Replace frayed or damaged extension cords with new ones.
- ✓ Keep extension cords out from under carpet, rugs or furniture as this could damage the cord and also present a fire hazard.
- ✓ Keep flammable materials such as books, paper and clothing away from heaters, stoves and other heating sources.
- ✓ Never leave cooking appliances unattended.
- ✓ Plug portable heaters and air conditioners directly into the outlet. If an extension cord is needed, to prevent overheating and risk of fire, use only one that is rated for this purpose to ensure that the cord can handle the electrical current.
- ✓ Never remove the 3rd prong from an electrical product. The 3rd prong is the grounding device and is a critical safety feature.
- ✓ Never use "cheater" plugs. These are used to plug a 3-pronged device into a 2-pronged outlet and overrides critical safety mechanisms.
- ✓ Avoid overloading outlets or circuits as this can cause overheating that may lead to fire.
- ✓ Test Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs) monthly to ensure they are working properly.

On average, every year in Ontario, electrical injuries send 1,700 people to emergency rooms and cause devastating property damage. Personal safety, by preventing electric shock and fire, is paramount. A little care and attention to detail to address electrical hazards can make all the difference when protecting your home, equipment and important electronic files like research, term papers, special photos and video clips.

Visit www.esasafe.com for more electrical safety information.

¹ For a list of recognized certification agency marks, visit www.esasafe.ca/GeneralPublic and click on the "View the Marks" button on the right side of the page.

The Electrical Safety Authority

The Electrical Safety Authority's (ESA) role is to enhance public electrical safety in Ontario. As a delegated 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 products safety. ESA works extensively with stakeholders throughout the province to educate, train, promote, and foster electrical safety.

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For more information, contact:

Kara Fraser/ Nancy Evans
Electrical Safety Authority
905-712-5387/905-712-7867
kara.fraser@electricalsafety.on.ca/nancy.evans@electricalsafety.on.ca