



Township of Lower Makefield
OFFICE OF THE FIRE SERVICE DIRECTOR
1100 Edgewood Road Yardley, PA 19067
(267) 274-1127 firesafety@lmt.org



Electrical Fire Safety

Electrical fires are pervasive throughout the United States, causing injury, claiming lives, and resulting in large losses of property. Most electrical fires result from problems with faulty electrical outlets and old wiring. Problems with extension/appliance cords and plugs also cause many home electrical fires. To help prevent an electrical fire in your home, routinely check electrical appliances and wiring and replace all worn, old, or damaged cords immediately.



Many avoidable electrical fires can be traced to misuse of electric cords, such as overloading circuits, poor maintenance, and running cords under rugs or in high traffic areas. Faulty electrical systems also cause many fires. Electrical fires occur most often during the months of December and January, winter months that call for more indoor activities and increases in lighting, heating, and appliance use. Fifteen percent of residential electrical fires start in the bedroom. Replace worn, old, or damaged appliance cords right away.

- **Electrical outlets**— Check for loose-fitting plugs, which can be a shock or fire hazard. Replace missing or broken wall plates so wiring and components are not exposed. If you have young children in the home, check that unused outlets are covered.
- **Plugs**—Never force them into outlets. Don't remove the grounding pin (third prong) to make a three-prong plug fit a two-conductor outlet. Avoid overloading outlets with adapters and too many appliance plugs.
- **Cords**— Make sure they are not frayed or cracked, placed under carpets or rugs, or placed in high traffic areas. Do not nail or staple them to walls, floors, or other objects.
- **Extension cords**—Use them on a temporary basis only. They are not intended as permanent household wiring. Make sure they have safety closures to protect young children from shock and mouth burn injuries.





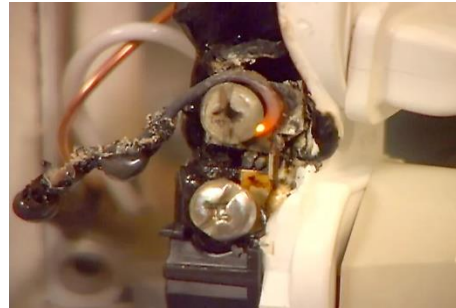
Township of Lower Makefield

OFFICE OF THE FIRE SERVICE DIRECTOR

1100 Edgewood Road Yardley, PA 19067
(267) 274-1127 firesafety@lmt.org



- **Light bulbs**—Check the wattage to make sure light bulbs match the fixture requirements. Replace bulbs that have higher wattage ratings than recommended on the fixture. Make sure they are screwed in securely, so they don't overheat.
- **Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs)**— Make sure GFCIs are installed in your kitchen, bathrooms, laundry, workshop, basement, and garage as well as on outdoor outlets. Test them monthly to ensure they're working properly.
- **Circuit breakers/Fuses**— Fuses should be properly rated for the circuit they are protecting. If you don't know the correct rating, have an electrician identify and label the correct size to be used. Always replace a fuse with the same size you are removing. Check that circuit breakers are working properly.
- **Appliances/Electronics**— If an appliance repeatedly blows a fuse, trips a circuit breaker or has given you an electrical shock, immediately unplug it and have it repaired or replaced. Look for cracks or damage in wiring and connectors. Use surge protectors to protect expensive electronics.



- **Electrical wiring**— Wiring defects are a major cause of residential blazes. Check periodically for loose wall receptacles, loose wires, or loose lighting fixtures. Listen for popping or sizzling sounds behind walls. Immediately shut off, then professionally replace light switches that are hot to the touch and lights that spark and flicker.

- **Service capacity**— As you continue to upgrade your home with more lighting, appliances and electronics, your home's electrical service capacity may become overburdened. If fuses blow or trip frequently, you may need to increase the capacity of your electrical service or add new branch circuits. A

qualified, licensed electrician can determine the appropriate service requirements for your home.

Having working smoke detectors dramatically increases your chances of surviving a fire and remember to practice a home escape plan frequently with your family.