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Electrical Safety Tips for Homeowners

During a typical year in the United States, home electrical problems account for many fires and many deaths and result in millions of dollars in property losses. Overloaded receptacles and the improper use of extension cords are prime causes of residential electrical fires. To help prevent electrical fires in your home, please consider the following recommendations:

- Only use electrical appliances, surge protectors, and power strips that have been tested and approved by an independent testing laboratory such as UL.
- Don't overload receptacles. Use only one major (high-wattage) appliance on the same circuit at any one time.
- Avoid the use of "cube taps" and other devices that allow the connection of multiple appliances into a single receptacle. If several appliances must be plugged into one receptacle (like for a computer or stereo system) use Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) approved power strips with internal circuit breakers to lessen the likelihood of overloading the circuit/breaker.
- Never use extension cords as permanent wiring. Avoid running extension cords across doorways or under rugs and carpeting.
- Replace cracked or frayed appliance cords.
- If an appliance feels too hot, smokes, or gives off a funny odor, unplug it immediately and have it serviced or replaced.
- Whenever possible, unplug electrical appliances after each use.
- To minimize the risk of electrical shock, install ground-fault interrupter (GFI) receptacles in all kitchens, bathrooms, outdoor areas, unfinished basements, garages and accessory buildings.
- In homes with small children, receptacles should have plastic safety covers or be of the tamper resistant (TR) type.
- If receptacles or switches feel warm, or if sparks are observed coming from receptacles or switches, shut off the circuit/breaker and have them checked by a Georgia licensed electrician.
- Place lamps on level surfaces, away from things that can burn. Avoid the use of halogen lamps as halogen bulbs burn extremely hot and are a common source of fires.
- Only use bulbs that are the correct wattage for lamps and light fixtures.
- Never use water to attempt to extinguish fires involving electrical equipment.
- At a minimum, install at least one smoke detector on every level of your home.

For more information on smoke detector requirements please contact the Peachtree Corners Building Department at 470-395-7027.

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