

Is Your Home Electrically Safe?

By Karen Parker
Post Staff Writer

Don't insist your home is electrically safe until you've given it a thorough check using the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's (CPSC) "Home Electrical Safety Audit."

Commissioner Terrence Scanlon of the Washington based CPSC informed the 11-page audit can be obtained free of charge simply by writing, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington, D.C. 20207. The checklist explains how to check for correct light bulbs, extension cords, heaters, and TV-audio equipment. The checklist also shows families what to inspect in every room from the living room to the basement.

The national and regional offices, as well as the resident posts of CPSC are working to make the country aware of electrical safety. "Data reveals 600 persons die of electric shock each year," Scanlon pointed out. He added, "1,100 die in electrical related fires that injure an additional 16,300 and cause \$950 million in property damage."

Scanlon stressed these fires don't occur in hotels or other institutions where large numbers of people are accommodated. The thousands of deaths which he described happen nationwide in or around homes. The frequently fatal accidents are situations like a plugged-in hair-dryer falling into a bathtub, causing electrocution. "Even if the power switch is turned off, a dryer that is plugged into an outlet is likely to electrocute someone in the bathtub," insisted Scanlon.

He warned against common practices such as placing extension cords under heavy furniture, inserting too many cords in one outlet, and allowing cords to run freely across floors instead of tacking them to walls.

Each of the seemingly minor points are actually hazardous. The CPSC publishes many booklets concerning safety with small kitchen appliances, repairing and installing electrical products, and

Druid Hills

Garden Club

Activities

The recent Druid Hills Garden Club meeting was held at the home of Minnie Connor. Sophease Blackmon and Inez Ellis led devotion.

The president of the club, Lois Love, opened the business session first with discussion about the Council's Fashion Show.

The members then elected Hazeline Long as queen and several activities were planned for this effort.

Inez Ellis shared pictures of the recycling project performed by the Council.

Mrs. Connor led a workshop on pruning roses. She shared that when cutting off the dead branches, the lines should always be slanted. The cuts should be sealed with clear nail polish or a commercial sealer.

The sealer prevents bores from getting into the plants. After pruning the plants, one should always shape them. Now is a good time to prune and set out trees. Also remember not to dog around the roots of the roses.

Following the workshop, the hostess of the garden club served a delightful meal. The following members were present: Inez Ellis, Queen Ellis, Roberta Lyles, Sophease Blackmon, Edna Gaston, Hattie McCree, Eva J. Wiley, Lois Love, Ann Williams and Hazeline Long.

Endometriosis

The Endometriosis Network will meet May 16, Wednesday, at Woman's World Spa in the Amity Gardens Shopping Center, 3900-A E. Independence Blvd., from 7-8:30 p.m.

Liz Williams will facilitate this group. The meeting is open to all women.

For more information, call a WomanReach peer counselor from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays, at 334-3614.

LIVING ROOM/FAMILY ROOM	
In a living room, you should check your lighting, its cords, extension cords, heaters and TV/audio equipment.	
<p>CHECK THE WATTAGE OF ALL BULBS IN YOUR LIGHTS</p> <p>Are the bulbs the appropriate wattage for the size of the fixture? Especially check bulbs in ceiling fixtures and "hooded" lamps that will trap heat.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>A bulb of too high wattage may lead to fire through overheating.</p> <p>Replace with a correct wattage bulb. If you don't know the correct wattage, use a bulb no larger than 60 watts.</p>
<p>CHECK ALL LAMP CORDS AND EXTENSION CORDS</p> <p>Are cords placed out of the traffic areas?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>Tripping hazard may result. Also, stepping on cords can damage them, leading to a fire hazard.</p> <p>Keep cords out of the way of traffic areas.</p>

This portion of the Home Electrical Safety Audit illustrates what you should check for electrical safety in your living room or family room. If you spot any problems, take action to remove or

even how to fly a kite, and use a ladder safely.

Because the number of electrical home fires is astronomical, CPSC staffs are advising families to install smoke detectors in their homes. "Sixty percent of Americans now have smoke detectors," Scanlon noted.

Allen Dobbins who directs the CPSC resident post in Charlotte, mentioned a program known as "Alarm Charlotte Totally," which provides smoke detectors for low-income, handicapped, and elderly residents. "The smoke detectors are installed by the fire department," Dobbins stated. Residents eligible for the service should telephone Brad Anderson of the Fire Prevention Department at 374-2101.

OUTSIDE THE HOME
Eliminating safety hazards within the home is good. However, there are many areas outside the home which should also be regarded.

Warm weather always means more work to make your yard beautiful. Be

safe in the process. CPSC estimates each year 8,400 people receive emergency room treatment for injuries involving power hedge trimmers; 57,000 victims are sent to the hospital emergency rooms yearly for accidents involving lawn mowers.

A fact sheet published by CPSC illustrated the following case: "Joe was trimming a hedge, and as he held a branch in his left hand, he cut the right finger of that hand. His finger was amputated."

The safety commission suggests using a hedge trimmer with cutting teeth and guards that are close together - not wide enough to put your finger between them. The trimmer should have two handles; the forward handle should be wide and high above the cutting blades.

Buy a lightweight machine which you can control easily.

Try to find a machine which has a pressure-sensitive switch so that it turns off when pressure is released.

correct them. Periodically, re-inspect using this checklist to be sure no new electrical safety problems have developed.

Buy a trimmer that is either double-insulated or grounded with a three-wire cord.

When using a power mower, wear close-fitting clothes and sturdy, nonslip shoes.

Go over the lawn carefully to pick up stones, wire, toys, dog bones... anything the mower might pick up and throw.

Always start the mower outdoors, near the lawn you're going to mow.

Mow forward as much as possible, so you can see where you're going.

Stay clear of the blade housing edge and the discharge chute.

Never point discharge chute at others.

Turn off the mower if you leave it even for a moment.

Following these tips should make your outdoor work more enjoyable and certainly safer. For more detailed information and pin-up safety tips for your home and garage, write the Consumer Product Safety Commission. All published materials are free.



Sylvester Scipio, a junior communications major from Lumberton, N.C., was elected Student Government Association President. Daryl Sledge, a junior English major from Chicago, Ill., was elected as Vice President. Other officers include Treasurer Jeremiah Sims of Sumter, S.C.; Recording Secretary Ella Mae Hairston of Martinsville, Va.; Corresponding Secretary Sarah Price of Martinsville, Va. Student representatives on the Board of Trustees are Patrice Stevenson of Charlotte; Angela Battle of Lenoir; and Charles Minnis of Scotch Plains, N.J.

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A&T Meeting

The Queen City Chapter of A&T State University will host its monthly meeting May 18 in the Holiday Inn North on Sugar Creek Rd. The meeting will begin at 7 p.m. and a social hour will follow. Activities will be held in the Azalea Room. All alumni are urged to attend.

MADD Meeting

Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) will meet Tuesday, May 15, at Quincy's Steak House. The members invite you to have dinner with them at 7 p.m. and join their discussion at 8 p.m. For more information, telephone Lucy Dickens, 9 a.m. - 9 p.m., at 364-1916 or the MADD answering service anytime, 568-4325.

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