

Electric Safety

Electricity plays a vital part in everyday life. Using electricity, people can turn on lights, prepare meals, and complete home improvement projects. However, electricity is a very powerful force, and if proper safety measures are not taken, it can be extremely dangerous and even deadly.

Accidents can be prevented by practicing safety around electric appliances, tools, and power lines. The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) offers these tips for safety when working with electricity, indoors and outdoors.

Indoor safety

- Check to make sure all electric cords are free of fraying or cracking. Replace any cords that may be damaged.
- When unplugging appliances, always pull from the plug, not the cord.
- Avoid using extension cords, especially for a long period of time. Do not string extension cords together, and make sure that the appliances do not exceed the amperage capability of the extension cord.
- Unplug appliances when they are not in use.
- Keep all electric appliances away from sinks, baths, and other water sources. If an appliance falls into water, never reach in to get it.
- Never use a metal object to dislodge something from an electric appliance.
- Make sure all electric plugs fit securely into the outlet. Never try to force a plug into an outlet, or use another object to make the plug fit.
- Avoid overloading an outlet with too many appliances.

Outdoor safety

- Downed power lines are often caused by thunderstorms or other severe weather. Always treat a downed power line as if it were live, and do not touch it or any objects around it. If you see a downed power line, contact the police department, fire department, or your electric company immediately.
- Keep all ladders, scaffolding, and tools at least 10 feet away from any overhead power lines. For high-voltage lines, allow even more clearance. Remember that overhead power lines may not be insulated like normal electric cords, so you should never touch an overhead line.
- Use clean, dry wood or fiberglass ladders around electric lines instead of metal.
- When installing a satellite dish on a roof, allow a distance of at least 1.5 times the length of the dish away from any power line. If the dish falls during installation, do not attempt to catch it.

- Before beginning a project that requires digging, call the Ohio Utilities Protection Service (OUPS) at (800) 362-2764 to have underground electric and utility wires marked. You should call at least 48 hours before digging.
- Select low-growing plants and shrubs that will not grow high enough to touch overhead power lines. If you are landscaping near an electric transformer, plant at least 10 feet away from it.
- Don't attempt to trim trees or shrubs that are growing near power lines. Call the local electric company if there are trees growing too close to a power line.
- Don't use electric powered lawn tools in wet conditions.
- Always wear rubber-soled shoes or boots when using electric lawn tools. Never operate an electric tool barefoot.
- Never allow children to climb trees that are touching electric lines.
- Never allow children to fly kites, balloons, or other toys near power lines. If a flying toy becomes tangled in a power line, do not attempt to retrieve it. Instead, call your local electric company for assistance.

Accidents

- If someone receives an electric shock, do not touch the victim because you could receive a shock. Immediately turn off the power source and call for medical assistance.
- If an electrical appliance catches on fire, do not try to put the fire out with water. Unplug the appliance, turn off the fuse or circuit, and use a fire extinguisher approved for use on electrical fires.
- If you are in a car and come in contact with a downed power line, stay in the car and call for help. If you need to get out of the car, jump away from the car and do not touch both the car and the ground at the same time. Immediately call for help, and do not provide physical assistance to anyone who may still be in the car.

By keeping these safety tips in mind, you can prevent electrical accidents from happening and be prepared to respond if an accident occurs.

If you would like to know more about the PUCO or have utility-related questions or concerns,

contact the PUCO at:

(800) 686-PUCO (7826)

(800) 686-1570 (TDD/TTY)

In Columbus only:

(614) 466-3292

(614) 466-8180 (TDD/TTY)

www.PUCO.ohio.gov

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