

CITY OF ROCK HILL, MO.

From Ameren – Home Safety Tips

<https://www.ameren.com/community-members/safety/home-safety-tips> Home Safety Tips

Appliances

- Keep appliances clean and well-maintained. A buildup of dust, trash or spider webs is an invitation for fire to start in the electrical system.
- Unplug any appliance before working on it.
- Replace worn or damaged cords.
- Keep electric appliances away from water.
- Do not touch any electrical appliance if you are standing in water.
- Unplug irons before leaving them unattended.
- Do not place anything on top of an appliance that uses its own cooling system (TV, computer, DVD player, game console). This can cause overheating of the appliance. It could even cause a fire.

Decorating

- Never overload electrical circuits or outlets. Use Underwriters Laboratories Inc. (UL®) certified surge protector strips if multiple outlets are required.
- Plug outdoor cords into GFCI (Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter) outlets. It is suggested that GFCI outlets be used for indoor lights, as well.
- Keep electrical connections off the ground and away from water.
- Only use insulated staples to attach extension cords and lights to wood. Never use nails, tacks or regular staples.
- Never leave holiday tree lights on when away from your residence.
- Avoid running outdoor lights or extension cords through door or window openings where they can be damaged.
- Do not place cords under rugs or carpets where they can be walked upon or where someone can trip over them.
- Watch for and correct problems with cords and faulty sockets, and always avoid jerking on wires because you can break insulation and damage plugs.
- Make certain lights, decorations and other electrical devices are disconnected when installing or working on them.

Extension Cords

- Extension cords are meant to be used temporarily. Avoid using extension cords over extended periods of time.
- Do not connect several extension cords together. This can lead to overheating and sparking.
- Use only three-wire extension cords for appliances with three-prong plugs. Never remove the third (round or U-shaped) prong, which is a safety feature designed to reduce the risk of shock and electrocution.
- Do not put extension cords in places where they may get pinched, such as under doors or windows.
- Try to keep slack on extension cords. Tight cords can strain plugs and receptacles and create loose connections.
- When using extension cords across doorways or heavy traffic areas, make sure they are taped to the floor securely so that you do not trip or fall on them.
- Do not staple or nail extension cords. You might damage the insulation made to protect you from the current and potentially expose a wire that may cause sparking or shocks.
- Never unplug an extension cord by pulling on the cord. Always unplug by firmly grasping the plug.
- Know how much your extension cord can handle. If you plug in more than one high-wattage appliance into an extension cord, it may overheat. To find out the wattage on your appliance, read the manual or check the appliance for a label.
- Never use an indoor extension cord outdoors - it could result in an electrical shock or hazard. Extension cords that can be used outdoors will be clearly marked as suitable for outdoor appliances.
- Use special, heavy-duty extension cords for high-wattage appliances, like air conditioners, portable electric heaters and freezers.
- Don't allow cords to come into contact with oil or other corrosive materials.
- Make sure extension cords are connected to Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) outlets, especially around water.

Landscaping

- Never prune trees near electric lines. Call [Ameren](#) first to inspect the trees.
- Inspect the trees on your property annually for hazards. For expert advice on tree health or hazards, consult an International Society of Arboriculture Certified Arborist.
- You can disrupt utility service - and even put your life in danger - just by failing to have the locations of natural gas, electric and other underground utility lines clearly marked before you plant that new tree, set that fence post, or build that deck. Contact [JULIE or Missouri One Call at 811](#) before you dig - it's the law!
- Be aware of and never strike [undergrounding](#) (underground power lines and equipment) when doing landscaping and lawn work.

Space Heaters

- Use space heaters to provide supplemental heat. Do not use them to thaw pipes or dry clothing.
- Select equipment that has the Underwriter's Laboratory (UL®) mark.
- Keep anything that may burn at least 3 feet away from space heaters.
- Be sure to turn off space heaters when leaving a room or going to sleep. Use space heaters with an automatic shut-off feature and heating element guards.
- Watch children and pets at all times when around a space heater. Even the slightest contact with a heating coil or element will cause a severe burn.
- Check your space heater for frayed or broken wiring. Have all problems repaired by a professional technician before operating.
- Avoid using extension cords with space heaters. Extension cords can easily overheat when used with a space heater.
- Keep your space heater cord away from high-traffic areas in your home. Tripping on or knocking over the heater can cause an injury or even a fire.
- If you have a liquid-fueled space heater, use only the fuel recommended by the manufacturer. Never substitute fuel as this could cause a fire. Before refueling, let the heater completely cool. Clean any spills quickly.

Electric Wiring & Outlets

- Be familiar with fuses and breakers for the circuits in your home. If an electrical device blows a fuse, trips a breaker, releases sparks, sounds or smells like it's burning, disconnect it immediately. Dispose of the appliance or have it repaired. If you are unsure about any equipment, contact a certified electrician.
- Look for the Underwriter's Laboratory (UL®) mark on all electric products you use. This indicates the product has met strict electrical standards.
- Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs) should be installed anywhere water is present, including bathrooms, kitchens and laundry rooms, or where easy round contact can be made, like in garages, basements, and outdoor areas. If you do not have GFCIs installed in these areas, contact a certified electrician.
- Make sure that plugs fit nicely into outlets. Loose-fitting plugs or plugs that do not fit may overheat and cause a fire.
- Do not allow any electrical wiring to be exposed - be sure that all switch and outlet covers fit over the wires.
- Place safety covers in outlets that are not being used and keep cords tucked away so that children do not play with them.
- Refrain from using "cheater plugs," devices that convert a two-pronged outlet into a three-prong outlet.
- Do not overload any electrical supply, such as an extension cord, power strip or outlet. When cords overheat, they can deteriorate and cause possible shock or fire.
- Do not place devices or their cords near hot surfaces, like stoves or fireplaces.
- When not in use, unplug all non-essential electrical appliances. You not only reduce a safety risk, but you will also save energy and money in the long run!
- Keep lamps at a distance from drapes, curtains, furniture or any flammable item.
- If you have an older home and have not updated your electrical wiring, you may want to have a certified electrician review your home wiring. Today's electronics and appliances can easily overload an older wiring system.