

## The Electrical Safety Foundation International

1300 North 17<sup>th</sup> Street, 17<sup>th</sup> Floor, Rosslyn, VA 22209  
Phone: (703)841-3229  
www.electrical-safety.org



Contact: Brett Brenner  
Phone: (703) 841-3296  
Email: Brett.Brenner@esfi.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# Shocking? May is National Electrical Safety Month

Protect your home and family from fires and electrocution

Arlington, VA – Hazards commonly found in older homes are increasingly causing fires and fatalities in the US. However, by taking a few simple steps and by incorporating newer technology you can protect your home from many of these dangers. Each year the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) sponsors May as National Electrical Safety Month. For this year's campaign, the foundation is helping consumers to take an active roll in identifying older home hazards and in safeguarding their families from the dangers these hazards pose.

Home electrical problems account for nearly 55,000 home fires every year. These fires cause over 500 deaths, injure more than 1,400 people, and account for \$1.4 billion in property damage. Older homes are at even greater risk to fire. According to the US Census Bureau, half of the homes in the United States were built before 1973. These homes and electrical systems were built before many of the appliances and electronics that we commonly use today were even around. To put this into perspective, a third of US homes were built before hair dryers or electric can openers were invented! Half of the homes were built before the advent of the garage door opener or the home computer!

"As each year goes by Americans are using more energy in their homes," says Brett Brenner, President of ESFI. "Many homes and electrical systems in the US are simply being overburdened leading to fires, deaths, and injuries."

For May 2008, ESFI is providing consumers with a checklist which will allow consumers to identify electrical dangers commonly found in each room of their home. ESFI will also be educating owners of older homes on newer fire prevention technology such as Arc Fault Circuit Interrupters (AFCIs). These advanced electronic circuit breakers detect dangerous conditions in a home's wiring and cut off power to the circuit before a fire develops.

Additionally, the foundation will be encouraging those living in older homes with children to install tamper resistant receptacles. These devices look like normal electrical outlets except they have a built-in shutter system that prevents children from inserting foreign objects into the slots. These outlets will prevent most of the 2,400 burns sustained by children each year from outlets.

More information and resources relating to National Electrical Safety Month 2008 can be found at [www.electrical-safety.org](http://www.electrical-safety.org).

*The Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) is dedicated exclusively to promoting electrical safety. Established in 1994, ESFI proudly sponsors National Electrical Safety Month each May and focuses on reducing electrically related deaths, injuries and property loss. Funded solely by the industry, ESFI is the leading authority and advocate of electrical safety.*

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