



SEDGWICK COUNTY  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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SEDGWICK COUNTY  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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FROM THE MANAGER

## Stay Safe This Summer: Backyard Electrical Safety

As the weather warms and you spend more time outdoors, it's essential to prioritize electrical safety. Hidden hazards can pose serious risks.

Here are some critical safety tips to keep your loved ones safe in your backyard.

### STAY AWAY FROM POWER LINES

Overhead power lines can be closer than they appear. Teach children never to climb trees near power lines and never to fly kites, drones, remote-controlled toys or balloons in areas where lines are present. If you see a downed power line, stay at least 50 feet away and report it to your local utility company immediately.

### TRAMPOLINE SAFETY

If you're considering an above-ground trampoline, remember to look up for power lines. Children jumping high into the air could come dangerously close to overhead electric lines, which pose a serious risk of shock or electrocution.

Thinking about installing an in-ground trampoline instead? Before you dig, call 811 to have underground utility lines marked.

Digging without knowing the location of buried electrical, gas or water lines can result in striking dangerous utility lines. This simple step can prevent accidents, service interruptions and costly repairs.

### WATER SAFETY

Water and electricity are a dangerous combination. Keep these tips in mind to prevent electrical hazards and create a safe space for swimming, soaking and outdoor fun.

- Ensure pool lights, filters and outdoor outlets have ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protection and inspect them regularly. GFCIs are designed to quickly shut off electrical power if they detect even a small change in electrical current.

*Continued on page 12B ►*



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## Stay Safe This Summer *Continued from page 12A* ▶

- ▶ If you notice flickering lights or feel a tingling sensation in the water, exit immediately and contact a professional. Faulty wiring can cause electric shock drowning.
- ▶ Avoid using plug-in devices, like radios, speakers or chargers, near water. Opt for battery-operated, waterproof devices to reduce the risk of shock.
- ▶ Know what to do in case of an electrical emergency. If someone is shocked, do not enter the water. Turn off the power source, call 911 and use a non-conductive tool, like a fiberglass pool pole, to assist.
- ▶ If it starts to rain, unplug electrical equipment, such as string lights, radios, speakers or power tools. Teach children not to touch electrical appliances with wet hands.

### OUTDOOR SPORTS

Sports and play areas are a haven for children, but they can also contain hidden electrical hazards. Here's how to protect your loved ones:

- ▶ Ensure swings and other tall play structures are far from overhead power lines.
- ▶ If you have outdoor lighting for night games, ensure the fixtures are weatherproof and properly installed. Have a professional check for frayed wires or loose connections.
- ▶ If kids are playing with a ball and it goes inside a substation

fence, teach them never to touch or climb the fence to attempt to retrieve it or any other item. Instead, call your electric utility to safely take care of it.

- ▶ Install a weather app on your phone to inform you of weather alerts. Lightning can occur up to 10 miles away from the heart of the storm, so if you hear thunder, seek shelter inside.

### SUPERVISE CHILDREN AROUND ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT

Children are naturally curious, which is why they should be kept away from outdoor electrical equipment like utility boxes, transformers and air conditioning units. If you have an outdoor generator, make sure it is stored in a secure, ventilated area that children cannot access and never plug a generator directly into your home's electrical system.

### AVOID DIY ELECTRICAL WORK

If you're planning a backyard upgrade, such as installing landscape lighting, sports lighting or poolside outlets, leave the electrical work to licensed electricians. DIY electrical projects can pose serious safety risks to you and your family if done incorrectly.

From poolside play to backyard sports, it's important to be aware of electrical hazards and how to avoid them. By following these guidelines, you can create a home oasis that is both fun and safe. For more tips on electrical safety, visit [www.SafeElectricity.org](http://www.SafeElectricity.org).

## 11 ELECTRICAL SAFETY TIPS FOR SENIORS

Electrical safety is crucial for everyone, but especially important for seniors. Adults over the age of 65 are at the greatest risk of death from fire and this risk increases with age, according to the National Fire Protection Association. As we age, our reflexes slow down, eyesight decreases and senses become less acute, making it essential to take extra precautions. Here are 11 ways for older adults to maintain a safe living environment:

**1** Ensure that electrical appliances are in good working condition. Regularly inspect cords and plugs for damage or wear and tear.

**2** Don't overload sockets or extension cords. Plugging too many appliances or devices into a single outlet can cause overheating and increase fire risk.

**3** Limit the use of carpets and rugs, which are tripping hazards, and avoid placing extension cords under them to prevent overheating. To help prevent trips and falls, cords should not stretch across a room. For a safer and more permanent solution, consider having an electrician install additional outlets.

**4** Unplug appliances when not in use and before cleaning or repairing them.

**5** Keep electrical appliances away from water and wet surfaces to prevent electric shock.

**6** Install ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs), which are designed to prevent electric shock by shutting off power when a ground fault is detected. Install them in areas where water and electricity are in close proximity, such as kitchens, bathrooms and outdoor spaces.

**7** Ensure proper lighting in the home, especially in hallways and staircases, to prevent trips and falls. Consider installing nightlights in bedrooms and bathrooms for better visibility.

**8** Set water heaters to lower settings to prevent scalding.

**9** When cooking on the stove, never leave pots and pans unattended, and avoid wearing loose clothing when cooking. Never open the oven door if something catches fire inside the oven. Consider using toaster ovens and small appliances that come equipped with an auto shut-off feature for added safety and convenience. This feature is designed to turn off the appliance automatically after a

set amount of time or when a task is completed, reducing the risk of overheating or fire.

**10** Use space heaters with caution. Space heaters can offer added warmth to a senior, who may get cold due to circulation issues that are common with aging. Use space heaters with built-in safety features such as an automatic shut-off switch. Keep space heaters on a steady surface and at least 3 feet away from flammable objects such as curtains, bedding or furniture. Plug them directly into an outlet — do not use an extension cord or power strip — and unplug them when not in use.

**11** Install smoke detectors on every floor and carbon monoxide detectors near all bedrooms. Test and replace the batteries twice a year — once in the spring and once in the fall.

**BONUS TIP:** If someone in the home uses a medical device that requires electricity, have a backup power source ready in case of a power outage and be sure to alert your local electric utility.

By following these safety measures, seniors can significantly reduce their risk of electrical accidents. Family members and caregivers can assist older adults in implementing these precautions to ensure their homes are safe and comfortable.



## STAY COOL. STAY EFFICIENT.

We're here to help you beat the summer heat. Take advantage of our efficiency programs and energy-saving recommendations designed to help you stay comfortable and cut costs all summer long.

# Keep Your Home's Second Floor Cool in the Summer

Are you struggling to keep the second story of your home cool on these sizzling summer days? As heat and hot air rises, so does the temperature in the upper level of your home. Keeping it cool can be a challenge, even if you have an air conditioner. The key is to limit heat gain and to keep the air circulating.

These steps can help cool down your upper floor, as well as keep your entire home cool through the end of the season. No sweat!

- ▶ **KEEP BLINDS AND DRAPES CLOSED.** Close blinds or curtains when the sun is shining to reduce solar heat. Remember that light-colored window coverings are most effective at blocking heat energy from the sun. Consider investing in thermal blocking drapes or insulated shades to keep your rooms cool and reduce demand on your air conditioning (AC) system.
- ▶ **LIMIT HEAT BEING CREATED UPSTAIRS.** Devices such as computers and hair dryers emit hot air. Use them downstairs to help reduce heat upstairs.
- ▶ **USE CEILING FANS.** Ceiling fans make you feel cool by circulating air and providing a cooling sensation on your skin. Be sure to set ceiling fans to rotate counterclockwise in the summer to push cool air downwards and turn them off when you leave to conserve energy.
- ▶ **ADJUST THE DAMPERS.** Control airflow by adjusting dampers up and down to restrict or increase airflow. If the second floor is warmer in the summer months, keep dampers on second-floor vents fully open, and only partially open the vents on the first floor to force more cool air to the second floor.
- ▶ **CHECK FOR AIR LEAKS.** EnergyStar.gov estimates that between 25% and 40% of the money spent on cooling and

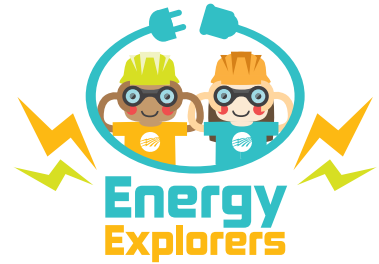
heating homes is lost due to air leakage problems. Identify air leaks in your home and use caulking, weatherstripping and insulation to seal the gaps.

- ▶ **TURN THE FAN FROM AUTO TO ON.** Use "on" instead of "auto" to keep your thermostat fan on and maintain air circulation throughout the home. This allows the entire house to stay cool, whether or not the air conditioner is running.
- ▶ **EVALUATE DUCTWORK.** Check your ductwork for leaks or improper sizing to ensure even air distribution in every part of your home. If you don't feel cold air coming from second floor vents, or you see old and cracked seals in your ductwork, it could be time for maintenance.
- ▶ **CHECK YOUR AIR FILTERS.** Regularly change your air filters to optimize airflow — dirty filters decrease air movement.
- ▶ **ADD PORTABLE AIR CONDITIONERS.** Use portable AC units in specific rooms that need extra cooling. They are relatively easy to install, effectively remove heat and provide a cool environment for sleeping.
- ▶ **ADJUST HVAC SYSTEMS.** Consider a zoned HVAC system, with thermostats on each floor, to control the temperature on each floor separately.
- ▶ **KEEP HEAT-GENERATING APPLIANCES OFF DURING THE HOTTEST HOURS.** Your dryer, oven and television produce heat, causing your air conditioner to work harder. Limit use of these appliances to early morning or evening when possible and consider grilling outdoors if you plan to cook.
- ▶ **DON'T FORGET THE ATTIC: IF YOUR ROOF AND ATTIC AREA ARE NOT PROPERLY INSULATED, HEAT WILL SEEP IN THROUGH THE ROOF AND HEAT THE SECOND FLOOR.** You can also have an attic fan or vents installed to help remove hot air from the attic.

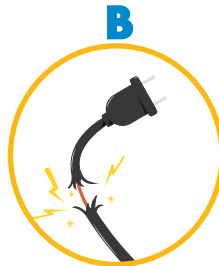
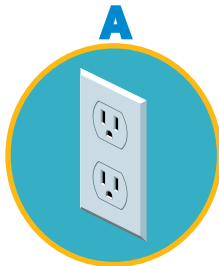
# CAN YOU SPOT THE ELECTRICAL HAZARD?

Electricity is essential for everyday life, but when combined with seemingly harmless items or elements, it can create a hazardous situation. View the grouped items below, then circle the two items that (when combined) create a potential electrical hazard.

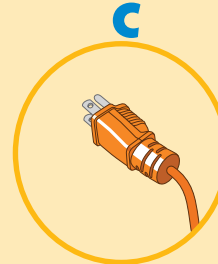
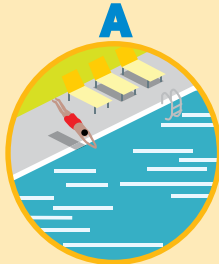
Check your work in the answer key below.



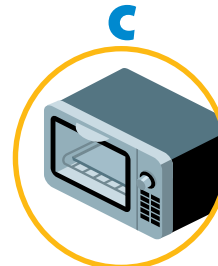
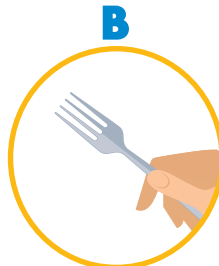
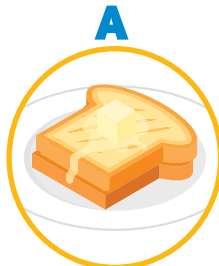
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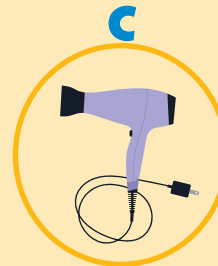
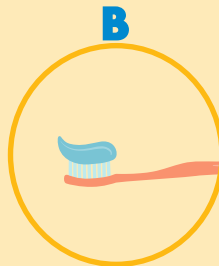
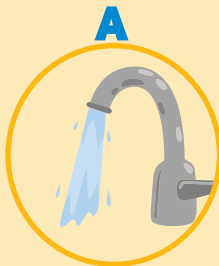
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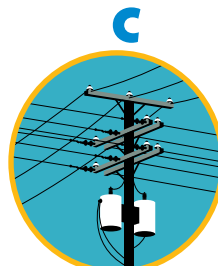
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4



5



Answer Key  
1.a,b  
2.a,c  
3.b,c  
4.a,c  
5.b,c