TOP 5 CAUSES OF ELECTRIC HOME FIRES

1. *Outlets & Appliances*

Most electrical fires are caused by faulty outlets and outdated appliances. Other fires are started by faults in appliance cords, receptacles and switches. Never use an appliance with a worn or frayed cord which can send heat onto combustible surfaces like floors, curtains and rugs and start a fire.

Running cords under rugs is another cause of electrical fires. Removing grounding plugs from a cord to be used in a two-prong electrical outlet also can cause a fire. The reason appliances have the extra prong is for use in situatons need extra amounts of electricity.

2. *Light Fixtures*

Light fixtures such as lamps and light bulbs are another common reason for electrical fires. Installing a bulb with a wattage too high for light fixtures is another leading cause of electrical fires. Always check the recommended bulb wattage on and never go over the recommended amount.

Another cause of fires is placing materials like cloth or paper over a lampshade. The material heats up and ignites, causing a fire. Faulty lamps and light fixtures also frequently result in fires.

3. *Extension Cords*

Don't use frayed cords. Misuse of extension cords is another electrical fire cause. Appliances should be plugged directly into outlet and not plugged into an extension cord for any length of time. Only use extension cords as a temporary measure. If you do not have the appropriate type of outlets for your appliances, hire an electrician to install new ones.

4. *Space Heaters*

Because these types of heaters are portable, people often put them too close to combustible surfaces such as curtains, beds, clothing, chairs, couches and rugs. Coil space heaters are especially dangerous in this regard because the coils become so hot they will almost instantaneously ignite any nearby flammable surface.

If you do use space heaters, use the radiator-type that diffuse heat over the entire surface of the appliance. These are less likely to ignite flammable items, but should still be kept away from them.

5. *Wiring*

Outdated wiring often causes electrical fires. If a home is over 20 years old, it may not have the wiring capacity to handle the increased amounts of electrical appliances in today's average home, such as computers, wide-screen televisions, video and gaming players, microwaves and air conditioners.

Breakers should be triggered when circuits get overloaded by too much electricity, but outdated breaker boxes often have worn connectors that do not work, causing the system to overload and start an electrical fire.

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