Burn Institute®

Electrical

Each year, hundreds of people die as a result of electrical contact. Most victims are between six and thirty-six months of age. Electrical injuries are easily preventable, if people are made aware.

SAFETY TIPS:

- Read and follow the directions for the proper operation and use of electrical appliances and equipment before using.
- Teach children to stay away from sources of high-voltage.
- Infants and toddlers require close supervision around all electrical outlets, appliances and cords.
- Cover all unused outlets with outlet covers to prevent toddlers or infants from sticking foreign objects into sockets.
- Adequate safe distances should be observed when working or doing recreational activities near utility power lines.
- Do not fly kites near power lines.
- When maintaining Christmas lights, using miniature lights will produce less heat and reduce the drying effect. If your lights are frayed or have cracked wiring or broken sockets, throw them away and buy a new set.
- Always turn off all lights and electronic devices on the tree before leaving your home or going to bed.
- Do not overload circuits during Christmas time!
- Keep tree away from heat sources such as heating vents, fireplaces, television sets and sunny windows. Be careful not to block any doors with the tree or with any rearranged furniture.

FACTS AND FIGURES:

- The severity of any electrical injury is directly related to three factors: resistance of the skin and internal body structures, Intensity, duration and frequency of the injury, and type of current – alternating or direct.
- Low voltage (<1000 volts) injuries most commonly occur in the home environment.
- High voltage (>1000 volts) injuries occur more typically in the workplace.
- Flame burn injuries may be directly or indirectly caused by electrical sources if a person's clothing or surroundings are ignited. Such burns are often extensive with all layers of skin involved.
- Arc burns occur in grounded victims when they have contact with high voltage power lines.