



Kitchen Safety

Cooking Up Safety in the Kitchen

The kitchen is the heart of the home. It's where families gather to cook favorite recipes, share warm meals, and reconnect with each other, but it's also the location where two-thirds of all home fires start. Identify and correct potential hazards in your kitchen before someone gets hurt.

Kitchen Safety Menu:

- Keep your stove and oven clean. Clean the exhaust hood and duct over the stove regularly.
- Keep the cooking area around the stove/oven clear of combustibles, such as towels, napkins, and pot holders.
- Plug counter top appliances into GFCI-protected outlets.
- Locate all appliances away from the sink.
- Keep appliance cords away from hot surfaces like the range or toaster.
- Unplug the toaster and other counter top appliances when not in use.
- Make sure there is room behind the refrigerator for air to circulate.
- Vacuum refrigerator coils every three months to eliminate dirt buildup that can reduce efficiency and create a fire hazard.
- Even a slight shock from a major appliance can indicate an extremely hazardous wiring condition. Turn the power to the appliance off at the circuit breaker. Do not touch the appliance until it has been checked by a licensed, qualified electrician.
- Do not use electrical appliances that have been wet. Water can damage the motors in electrical appliances like freezers and refrigerators.

Safety Spotlight: GFCIs

A ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) is a device designed to protect people from electrical shock and electrocution. The GFCI constantly monitors electricity flowing in a circuit, quickly switching off power to that circuit if any loss of current occurs.

GFCI receptacles are used in place of standard outlets in areas of the home where water may come into contact with electrical products, such as the bathroom, garage, kitchen, and basement.

GFCIs should be tested every month to ensure they are in working order.

Energy Saving Tip:

A toaster oven uses 1/3 as much energy as a full-sized oven. Use toaster ovens for cooking small meals.

Visit ESFI's *Virtual Home* at <http://virtualhome.esfi.org/> to learn more about home electrical safety.