Flipping a light switch. Plugging in a coffeemaker. Charging a laptop computer. These are second nature for most of us. Electricity makes our lives easier. However, we need to be cautious and keep safety in mind.

**SAFETY TIPS**

- Have all electrical work done by a qualified electrician.
- When you are buying or remodeling a home, have it inspected by a qualified electrician.
- Only plug one heat-producing appliance (such as a coffee maker, toaster, space heater, etc.) directly into a wall receptacle outlet. Extension cords and plug strips should not be used.
- Arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) are a kind of circuit breaker that shuts off electricity when a dangerous condition occurs. Consider having them installed in in your home. Use a qualified electrician.
- Use ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) to reduce the risk of shock. GFCIs shut off an electrical circuit when it becomes a shock hazard. They should be installed inside the home in bathrooms, kitchens, garages and basements. All outdoor receptacles should be GFCI protected.
- Test AFCIs and GFCIs once a month to make sure they are working properly.
- Use light bulbs that match the recommended wattage on the lamp fixture. There should be a sticker that indicates the maximum wattage light bulb to use.
- In homes with small children, make sure your home has tamper resistant (TR) receptacles.
- Keep electrical appliances away from wet floors and counters; pay special care to electrical appliances in the bathroom and kitchen.

**EXTENSION CORDS**

- Consider having additional circuits or outlets added by a qualified electrician to reduce the use of extension cords.
- Check electrical cords to make sure they are not running across doorways or under carpets.
- Frayed wires can cause fires. Replace all worn, old or damaged appliance cords immediately.
- Extension cords are for temporary power sources. They should not be used as a long term solution.
- Do not overload extension cords, power strips or outlets. They can overheat and deteriorate becoming a shock or fire hazard.

**IMPORTANT REMINDER**

Call a qualified electrician or your landlord if you have:

- Frequent problems with blowing fuses or tripping circuit breakers
- Generally if an appliance generates a lot of heat it draws a lot of power. Examples are hair dryers, space heaters, microwaves, curling irons, toaster ovens.
- A tingling feeling when you touch an electrical appliance.
- Discolored or warm wall outlets
- A burning or rubbery smell coming from an appliance
- Flickering or dimming lights
- Sparks from an outlet
- An appliance cord or extension cord that feels warm to the touch.

**DECEMBER IS THE LEADING MONTH WHEN MOST ELECTRICAL FIRES OCCUR!**