

Preventing Electrical Fires and Explosions

Electricity is one of the most common causes of fire and is an ignition source for many explosions.

Electrical Fires

Fires can be started by electrical arcing or connections where wires are improperly spliced to other components, such as receptacle outlets and switches. Also, if heat develops in an overloaded conductor from too much current flow, a fire can be ignited. An electrical fire is one where the source is energized.

What to Do...

- ☒ Small electrical fires can be put out with a Class C or combination fire extinguisher.
- ☒ Never use water on an electrical fire.
- ☒ If the fire appears to be growing rapidly, or if it's already too large or smoky to use an extinguisher, evacuate immediately.
- ☒ Call 911 or your local fire department or emergency response system.
- ☒ Stay low to avoid smoke inhalation and encourage others to do the same.
- ☒ If someone's clothing catches fire, force him or her to stop, drop and roll to extinguish the flames.

Electrical Explosions

Explosions can occur when electricity provides a source of ignition for explosives, such as when flammable or combustible chemical vapors or gases are present.

Prevention Tips

- ☒ Never store flammable or combustible materials where there's a chance of an electrical fire.
- ☒ Never put more current through a conductor than it can handle; avoid changing breakers or fuses to higher ratings.
- ☒ Look for high-resistance connections and have them corrected.
- ☒ Inspect all cords and equipment for proper insulation.
- ☒ Use only tools and equipment that are in good working order.

