

Backyard Safety

Backyard electrical safety

As the weather warms, and you spend more time outdoors it's essential to prioritize electrical safety. Hidden hazards can pose serious risks.

Here are some critical safety tips to keep your loved ones safe in your backyard.

Stay away from power lines

Overhead power lines can be closer than they appear. Teach children never to climb trees near power lines; and never to fly kites, drones, remote-controlled toys or balloons in areas where lines are present. If you see a downed power line, stay at least 50 feet away and report it to your local utility company immediately.

Trampoline safety

If you're considering an above-ground trampoline, remember to look up for power lines. Children jumping high into the air could come dangerously close to overhead electric lines, which pose a serious risk of shock or electrocution.

Thinking about installing an in-ground trampoline instead? Before you dig, call 811 to have underground utility lines marked. Digging without knowing the location of buried electrical, gas or water lines can result in dangerous utility strikes. This simple step can prevent accidents, service interruptions and costly repairs.

Water safety

Water and electricity are a dangerous combination. Keep these tips in mind to prevent electrical hazards and create a safe space for swimming, soaking and outdoor fun.

- Ensure pool lights, filters and outdoor outlets have ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protection and inspect them regularly. GFCIs are designed to quickly shut off electrical power if they detect even a small change in electrical current.
- If you notice flickering lights or feel a tingling sensation in the water, exit immediately and contact a professional. Faulty wiring can cause electric shock drowning.
- Avoid using plug-in devices, like radios, speakers or chargers, near water. Opt for battery-operated, waterproof devices to reduce the risk of shock.
- Know what to do in case of an electrical emergency. If someone is shocked, do not enter the water. Turn off the power source, call 911 and use a non-conductive tool, like a fiberglass pool pole, to assist.
- If it starts to rain, unplug electrical equipment, such as string lights, radios, speakers or power tools. Teach children not to touch electrical appliances with wet hands.

Outdoor sports

Sports and play areas are a haven for children, but they can also contain hidden electrical hazards. Here's how to protect your loved ones:

- Ensure swings and other tall play structures are far from overhead power lines.
- If you have outdoor lighting for night games, ensure the fixtures are weatherproof and properly installed. Have a professional check for frayed wires or loose connections.
- If kids are playing with a ball and it goes inside a substation fence, teach them never to touch or climb the fence to attempt to retrieve it or any other item. Instead, call your electric utility to safely take care of it.
- Install a weather app on your phone to inform you of weather alerts. Lightning can occur up to 10 miles away from the heart of the storm, so if you hear thunder, seek shelter inside.
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Supervise children around electrical equipment

Children are naturally curious, which is why they should be kept away from outdoor electrical equipment like utility boxes, transformers and air conditioning units. If you have an outdoor generator, make sure it is stored in a secure, ventilated area that children cannot access and never plug a generator directly into your home's electrical system.

Avoid DIY electrical work

If you're planning a backyard upgrade, such as installing landscape lighting, sports lighting or poolside outlets, leave the electrical work to licensed electricians. DIY electrical projects can pose serious safety risks to you and your family if done incorrectly.

From poolside play to backyard sports, it's important to be aware of electrical hazards and how to avoid them. By following these guidelines, you can create a home oasis that is both fun and safe.

For more tips on electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.safepower.org).