



ESFI Warns of Electrical Hazards Caused By Severe Winter Weather

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Contact: Jordanna Shapiro

Phone: (703) 841-3291

Arlington, VA—As communities across the United States prepare for winter, the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) warns consumers to be mindful of electrical hazards that can be left behind in the aftermath of a major winter storm or disaster.

“Electrical dangers associated with downed power lines, portable generators, and submerged electrical equipment can still cause injuries and deaths once a snow or ice storm has ended,” cautions ESFI president, Brett Brenner.

ESFI recommends taking the following electrical safety precautions during severe winter weather:

Post-Disaster Safety

- After a storm, return home during daylight hours, especially if power has not been restored.
- If you smell gas, notify emergency authorities immediately. Do not turn on lights, light matches, or engage in any activity that could create a spark.
- Use caution when restoring disrupted power after a storm. Contact your utility company to report damage to any part of your electrical service.

Portable Generators

- Portable generators can be used as a source of power if power goes out during a storm and causes electrical outages.
- Do not operate a portable generator in your home, basement, or garage. Generators can very quickly produce high levels of carbon monoxide, which can be deadly.
- Be sure that the generator is dry and properly grounded. Plug appliances directly into the generator to prevent back feed along the power lines.
- Make sure that there is at least one working carbon monoxide detector in your home. Test the batteries at least twice a year, at the same time smoke detector batteries are tested.

Downed Power Lines

- Always assume fallen power lines are energized. Stay at least ten feet away from a downed power line and any nearby objects it may be touching, such as a fence or a tree limb.
- Contact your utility company immediately to report downed power lines outside your home.
- Never touch a person who is in direct or indirect contact with a downed power line. Instead, call 911 immediately.
- Never attempt to move a downed power line with another object. Even non-conductive materials like wood or cloth that are slightly wet can conduct electricity.

ESFI is a 501(c) (3) organization dedicated exclusively to promoting electrical safety. ESFI proudly sponsors National Electrical Safety Month each May, and engages in public education campaigns throughout the year to prevent electrical fires, injuries, and fatalities. To learn more about ESFI and electrical safety visit www.electrical-safety.org.

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