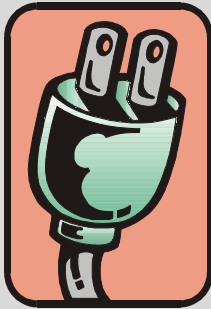


Florida Public Service Commission

Consumer Bulletin

E. Leon Jacobs, Jr.,
Commissioner

ELECTRIC SAFETY



Electricity is often viewed as a mysterious and dangerous force in our world. Yet, each year, our dependence on this force grows as more and more gadgets in the home, workplace and at play are plugged into our best energy source. Think

of all the electric appliances around the home that didn't exist just ten or twenty years ago: microwaves, VCRs, video games, heated water beds, personal computers, garage door openers, compact disc players ... they all contribute to increased demand for electricity.

Unfortunately, however, every year we hear tragic stories of individuals who have encountered the dangers of this force through contact with energized electric lines or lightning. Florida averages about 10 deaths and 25 injuries annually from electrical accidents.


Your chances of being struck by lightning are one in 600,000, but can be reduced by following safety rules. Most lightning deaths and injuries occur when people are caught outdoors. You should always check the weather forecast before leaving for extended periods outdoors and watch for signs of approaching storms.

The best way to reduce electrical accidents is through proper electric utility construction and public education. The Florida Public Service Commission (PSC) is the agency to call if you think you have an electric safety problem in your home or community. Specifically, the PSC's Bureau of Electric Safety, is responsible for conducting inspections of facilities of all electric utilities in the state. The utilities are required to fix any violations reported by this Bureau.

Utilities are required by PSC rules to report electrical accidents, occurring in connection with any part of their transmission or distribution systems, which involve serious injury.

If you have questions about electric safety, please call the PSC at **1-800-342-3552**. You may also contact us by e-mail at **contact@psc.state.fl.us**, or visit our Internet home page at **http://www.floridapsc.com**. Also, additional information on the basics of electricity and electric safety can be found at **http://members.aol.com/krampf/home.html**.

ELECTRIC SAFETY TIPS

-  Follow manufacturers' instructions for all appliances.
-  Keep anything electric away from the bathtubs and basins.
-  Never turn on a washer or dryer while standing on a wet floor.
-  Never yank an electric cord out of a wall socket or tie it in knots.
-  Never use an electric cord that is frayed, torn or melted.
-  When outdoors, don't use electric tools on wet ground or grass when barefoot.
-  Never take shelter under trees during an electrical storm.
-  Remind children not to put anything into an electrical outlet. Use plastic caps if there are young ones at home.
-  Trees, particularly if wet, can conduct electricity. If you plan to trim, prune or pick fruit from a tree, make sure that branches and tools don't contact power lines.

E. Leon Jacobs, Jr. is a Florida Public Service Commissioner. The PSC sets the rates utility companies charge for natural gas, electric and telephone service within the state. In 36 counties, it sets the price you pay for the water you drink, if your water company is privately-owned.