



CPSC and ESFI NEWS



US Consumer Product Safety Commission

[Electrical Safety Foundation International](#)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 22, 2002
Release # 02-128

CPSC Consumer Hotline: (800) 638-2772
CPSC Media Contact: Scott Wolfson, (301) 504-7051
Executive Director: Michael Clendenin, (703) 841-3296

CPSC, ESFI Warn Flood Victims About the Dangers of Mixing Water and Electricity

WASHINGTON, D.C. - As the mountain snow melt begins and flood season approaches, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) are warning consumers to beware of the dangers that are present when water comes in contact with electricity. A flood can cause tragic losses to families, but to protect against the unexpected loss of life, CPSC and ESFI have some important safety advice:

- Do not use electrical appliances that have been wet. Water can damage the motors in electrical appliances, such as furnaces, freezers, refrigerators, washing machines, and dryers.
- If electrical appliances have been under water, have them dried out and reconditioned by a qualified service repairman. Do not turn on damaged electrical appliances because the electrical parts can become grounded and pose an electric shock hazard or overheat and cause a fire.
- Before flipping a switch or plugging in an appliance, have an electrician check the house wiring and appliance to make sure it is safe to use.
- Use a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) to help prevent electrocutions and electrical shock injuries. Portable GFCIs require no tools to install and are available at prices ranging from \$12 to \$30.
- Electrical circuit breakers, fuses, GFCIs, receptacles, plugs, and switches can malfunction when water and silt get inside. Discard them when they have been submerged
- When using a wet-dry vacuum cleaner or a pressure washer be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions to avoid electric shock.
- Do not allow the power cord connections to become wet. Do not remove or bypass the ground pin on the three-prong plug.
- Take care when stepping into a flooded basement, and be aware that submerged outlets, electrical outlets or electrical cords may be energizing the water, which is a potentially lethal trap.

"As families begin to clean up following a flood, there are hidden electrical hazards throughout the home," says Michael Clendenin, executive director of the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI). "Take the time to protect your family and home by making a new beginning that includes finding and fixing all electrical dangers caused by a flood."

"After the flood waters have receded, CPSC wants families to be aware that electricity has the potential to cause an even greater loss than that of personal property," says Thomas Moore, CPSC Acting Chairman. "We hope that this information helps prevent deaths and injuries during these difficult times."

For people who live in counties already declared eligible, you can contact the Federal Emergency Management Agency's National Flood Insurance Program at (800) 427-4661.

These and other electrical safety tips are available at the Foundation's Web site at www.electrical-safety.org or call (703) 841-3229.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is charged with protecting the public from unreasonable risks of injury or death associated with the use of the thousands of consumer products under the agency's jurisdiction. Deaths, injuries, and property damage from consumer product incidents cost the nation more than \$900 billion annually. CPSC is committed to protecting consumers and families from products that pose a fire, electrical, chemical, or mechanical hazard. CPSC's work to ensure the safety of consumer products - such as toys, cribs, power tools, cigarette lighters and household chemicals - contributed to a decline in the rate of deaths and injuries associated with consumer products over the past 30 years.

To report a dangerous product or a product-related injury, go online to: SaferProducts.gov, call CPSC's Hotline at (800) 638-2772 or teletypewriter at (301) 595-7054 for the hearing and speech impaired. Consumers can obtain this news release and product safety information at www.cpsc.gov. To join a free e-mail subscription list, please go to www.cpsc.gov/cpsclist.aspx.

Connect with us!



YouTube



Twitter



Flickr