

Fall Home Electrical Safety Checklist



Welcome to fall: a great time for an electrical safety refresh. Shorter days and cooler temps mean more lighting, heating, and appliance use, so a quick seasonal check now can prevent headaches later. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) suggests doing a home electrical safety check about every six months, and time changes are a perfect reminder.

☐ **Test GFCI outlets monthly**

Why it matters: GFCIs help prevent electrocution in areas with water. How to: Plug in a lamp, press TEST to confirm the light goes off, then press RESET to restore power; replace any GFCI that fails.

☐ **Check and test smoke/CO detectors**

Why it matters: As heating systems kick on, fire and CO risks rise. How to: Press test buttons, swap batteries, and gently clean dust from sensors.

☐ **Feel outlets and switches for warmth or discoloration**

Why it matters: Unusual heat or burn marks can signal loose connections or overloads that can start a fire. How to: Stop using the device on that outlet and have an electrician check it if it's warm or not working properly.

☐ **Label your electrical panel clearly**

Why it matters: Clear labels save time and stress during outages or emergencies. How to: Identify and label each circuit so you know what it controls. Make sure everyone in the home knows where the main breaker is and how to shut off power safely.

☐ **Exercise and test breakers (including GFCI/AFCI)**

Why it matters: Breakers can stick; regular testing keeps safety devices working. How to: Once a year, unplug sensitive appliances, then flip each breaker off/on three times; test GFCI/AFCI breakers monthly using their test buttons and reset per instructions.

☐ **Use the right light bulbs (and consider LEDs)**

Why it matters: Over-wattage bulbs can overheat fixtures and wiring. How to: Match bulb wattage to fixture labels; when unsure, use 60W or less (25W for small unmarked ceiling fixtures). LEDs can reduce energy use and offer longer life for indoor and outdoor lighting.

☐ **Inspect extension cords and power strips**

Why it matters: Damaged or overloaded cords can overheat and cause fires. How to: Replace frayed cords, avoid running cords under rugs or furniture, and use extension cords only temporarily. Don't overload cords or strips, and use safety closures where children are present.

☐ **Add childproof covers to unused outlets**

Why it matters: Children can suffer serious shocks or burns if they insert objects. How to: Install safety covers on all unused outlets within reach.



Practice space heater safety

Why it matters: Space heaters can ignite nearby combustibles or tip over. How to: Keep heaters at least 3 feet from anything that can burn, use models with recognized safety labels (UL/ETL/CSA), and place them on a stable surface.



Check outdoor outlets, lighting, and cords

Why it matters: Moisture plus electricity is a shock and fire hazard. How to: Use weatherproof “in-use” covers and ensure outdoor outlets are GFCI-protected. Before shorter days set in, inspect exterior fixtures for damage and confirm GFCIs work properly



Decorate safely for the season

Why it matters: Outdoor decor and lighting increase electrical load and hazard potential. How to: Keep cords out of standing water, don’t staple or pinch light strings, unplug inflatables overnight, and avoid overloading circuits.



Use small kitchen appliances with care

Why it matters: Unattended or improperly placed appliances can cause shocks or fires. How to: Unplug when not in use, keep cords away from heat and water, and never reach into water for a plugged-in appliance—shut power off at the panel first if something falls in.



Inspect electric blankets

Why it matters: Damaged or covered blankets can overheat and ignite. How to: Discard blankets with frayed spots or damaged cords, keep them flat (not folded), and avoid placing anything on top while in use.



Protect electronics from surges

Why it matters: Surges can damage sensitive equipment. How to: Use quality surge protectors with certification labels for TVs/computers, and consider whole-home surge protection for broader coverage.



Prep your standby generator

Why it matters: Storms and outages are more common in colder months, and you want reliable power. How to: Check fuel, run a test cycle, and schedule maintenance if it’s been a while.



Know when to call a pro

Why it matters: Frequent breaker trips, warm/discolored outlets, or signs of corrosion/rust at the panel point to issues that need expert diagnosis. How to: Have a licensed electrician assess panel capacity and circuit load before winter demand ramps up.

Ready for peace of mind?

If you’d like a professional “eyes-on,” Speck Family Electric is here to help. We’re a family-owned, fully licensed and insured team serving Sparta and nearby communities with straightforward pricing and 5-star service—covering safety inspections, panel upgrades, GFCI/AFCI protection, lighting, smart home solutions, surge protection, and Generac home generators.

Call or book your Fall Safety Check today, and we’ll make sure your home is safe, efficient, and ready for the season.

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