

Common sense use of appliances makes a safer home

NEWARK, Del. — Common sense use and care of home appliances means a safer home for you and your family.

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, 600 Americans die annually from electric shock. Another 1,000 die in electrical-related fires that injure an additional 16,300 and cause \$950 million in property damage. All of these deaths and injuries occur in or around the home. Some involve home appliances.

Many of these accidents are related to patterns of appliance use or misuse, the commission reports.

To make your own home safer, Pat Wilson, extension home economist for Delaware State College, suggests appliance users adopt the following safety tips from the Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers. "These practices will require little or no extra effort or time on your part," she says, "and they can save your life."

• Regularly refer to the use and care booklets provided by ap-

pliance manufacturers. These booklets tell how to install, operate and maintain your appliances.

• Have a qualified electrician check to make sure you have adequate electrical service to operate your appliances. When adding a new one, be sure it won't overload the circuit on which it is used.

• See that appliances are properly installed. Don't do this yourself unless you have a kit or clear instructions from the manufacturer. It is important that appliances have adequate clearance for needed ventilation, and that they are properly leveled and securely supported.

• Be sure appliance circuits, when necessary, have adequately grounded, three-prong receptacles and that grounded outlets are properly polarized. Don't use extension cords with your appliances. If you must use one temporarily, it should match the number of wires and wire size of the appliance cord.

• Don't overload your ap-

pliance. Use them only for their intended purpose. (For example, a range is not intended to heat your home, but to cook food.) Use an appliance only with those products recommended by the manufacturer. Don't add accessories, such as rollers or casters, that are not recommended.

• Take extra care when using appliances around water. Electricity and water can be a deadly combination. Don't immerse portable appliances in water unless the use and care booklet says to do so.

• Unplug small appliances when not in use. Even with the switch off, some still carry electric current when plugged in. An accidental drop in dishwasher or the bathtub could be fatal. Appliances can also be accidentally turned on without the owner knowing it.

• Always grasp the plug—not the cord—when disconnecting an appliance from an outlet. Don't disconnect the cord from the appliance first, leaving it plugged into the outlet. Don't leave ap-

pliance cords dangling from counters or within reach of children.

• Keep your appliances in good repair. Bumping or dropping can damage safety features, so have them checked if this happens. Replace worn cords and loose plugs as needed, but don't do it yourself unless you know how.

• Don't operate an appliance that is partly disassembled or when some part is missing or broken. Unplug appliances before cleaning or attempting simple repairs. Don't bypass safety devices. If the appliance stops operating, something may be wrong and service is needed.

• Keep children away from appliances in operation. Unplug and close or lock appliances when not in use. As children grow older, teach them safe appliance use.

• With the obvious exception of such appliances as your refrigerator, freezer and room air conditioner, don't leave the house when appliances are operating.

"Home appliances make life easier," Wilson says. "They provide conveniences, save time and perform important functions around the house. That's why we buy them! By following these common sense precautions, you can still enjoy the benefits of your appliances and have a safer home."

Watermelon growers meeting

NEWARK, Del. — A meeting for commercial watermelon growers will be held Friday, January 11, at the University of Delaware Georgetown substation. Registration for the extension-sponsored event will begin at 9:30 a.m. The meeting will start at 9:45 a.m. and adjourn at 2:45 p.m.

Highlight of the program will be a telelecture on Florida watermelon production by Dr. Gary Elmstrom, director of the University of Florida's Leesburg Agricultural Research Center. Dr. Elmstrom has been asked to provide an overview of the industry in his state, covering

planting and harvest dates, current varieties, and typical grower cultural practices (spacing, fertilizer programs, weed and disease control). He will also discuss current watermelon variety and fertility research at his institution.

Other talks will cover disease control and sprayer coverage, and the economics of melon production. Lunch will be served at noon, compliments of local agribusiness firms.

For further information contact extension vegetable specialist Ed Kee at (302) 856-5250.



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