

# MAX<sup>®</sup> safety news

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## Avoiding Close Calls with Canines

*Kids and dogs just seem to belong together.*

Both are usually lovable, ready to play, and have energy levels that seems unlimited. Despite this, any dog (even the most loveable) can bite if provoked. Estimates for dog bites range as high as 4.5 million annually, with around 1 million bites receiving medical attention. Roughly 60% of the victims are children.

Make sure your children know how to be a friend to "man's best friend." Young children don't understand that eye poking, ear pulling, and tail grabbing are not well received. Make sure that young children are supervised around dogs, particularly unfamiliar ones.

Even older children (and adults) make the mistake of assuming that all dogs are as friendly

as their pet at home. An unfamiliar dog may experience a child's friendly approach as a threat, especially when the dog has food, puppies, or is in an unfamiliar situation.

Children do not instinctively know how to behave around dogs or other animals, but learn quickly if properly taught. Talk with them about animal care, treating animals with respect, avoiding unfamiliar animals, and what to do if a dog attacks.

If you aren't sure what to do, you're not alone... many people don't. To get the facts about how to deal with dogs, contact your local veterinarian. They can provide you with answers and/or written information.

## THE CONFUSION ABOUT FUSES

Home electrical fuses often get a bad rap for being more dangerous and inferior to circuit breakers. When, if properly installed, fuses may be more accurate. The key is realizing the misuse of fuses before serious damage occurs.

Electrical fuses and circuit breakers are like "automatic shut off valves" for the flow of current in the electrical circuit. When the flow of current exceeds the capacity of the circuit, the wiring in the circuit starts to overheat. This causes the element in the fuse to melt or "blow out", stopping the electrical flow and ending the overheating. A circuit breaker stops the electrical flow when it "trips", requiring it to be reset by flipping the circuit switch at the electrical panel.

The fuse needs to be unscrewed and replaced with another fuse. However, this is where the potential danger arises. Residential fuses of different electrical flow capacities often fit the same socket. Thus, a blown fuse can easily be replaced by a fuse that requires a much higher electrical flow before it "blows". The result can be a fuse that won't melt or blow out before parts of the circuit overheat and catch fire. Commonly, our inspectors find 25 to 30 amp fuses (bright green) where there should be 15 to 20 amp fuses.

*If you have questions or concerns, contact a qualified electrician. Don't be confused about fuses.*

# EXTENDED FRIEND

An extension cord has to be one of the simplest and friendliest devices in the house. It conveniently moves electrical power to places distant from the outlet; it comes in a variety of sizes and colors; and there are no moving parts. What could be simpler?

Extension cords can be a great convenience, but even this long, skinny friend can be a safety hazard if not used correctly. According to the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission, emergency rooms treat 2,200 injuries related to extension cords each year. Additionally, 5,500 residential fires involving extension cords result in 230 injuries and 85 deaths.

- \* Extension cords are for temporary use, not a long-term solution to inadequate wiring.
- \* Use only cords listed by underwriters' Laboratories (UL) or other recognized national safety testing organizations.
- \* Never overload extension cords.
- \* Do not connect extension cords to other extension cords. Get a longer cord.
- \* Never use cords manufactured for indoor use outdoors.
- \* Throw away cracked or damaged cords.
- \* Use only 3 prong extension cords for appliances that have 3 prong plugs.
- \* Avoid covering extension cords with carpet or rugs. This increases fire risk due to unrecognized cord damage or overheating.



## Grilling Safety

There's nothing more enjoyable than having friends and family over for a barbeque. To no one's enjoyment, about 8,300 of these events are annually joined by unwanted, yet welcomed fire departments who limit property loss to around \$137 million (according to the National Fire Protection Association). Obviously, the grill chef wants to focus heat on the hamburgers, not surrounding property. A few tips before your next barbeque:

- \* Keep grills away from combustible objects such as deck railing, overhangs, house siding, and tree branches.
- \* Check gas grill hoses and connections for leaks. To check, turn on the propane tank and coat hoses and connections with soapy water. Bubbles indicate leaks that require tightening of connections or replacement of hoses.
- \* Use grills outdoors only. Charcoal can spread highly toxic fumes.
- \* Place grills a safe distance from outdoor activities and areas of high foot traffic.
- \* Advise children of grilling dangers and enforce a "3 foot safe area" they may not enter.
- \* Use long handle utensils to protect against unexpected flare-ups.
- \* Avoid wearing long sleeve and/or loose fitting clothing that can easily ignite.
- \* Empty grease pan carefully and dispose of properly.
- \* Keep a fully charged fire extinguisher close by.

*We wish you barbeques filled with fun and friendship.*