

OVERLOADING CIRCUITS

Too many devices plugged into the same circuit can create heat, damage wiring, and lead to fire hazards.

- Electrical circuits are only designed to handle a certain load. When they're pushed beyond that limit, they can overheat and fail.

If you notice any of these warning signs of an overloaded circuit, stop using some of the devices on that circuit and have it checked by a qualified electrician.

- flickering or dimming lights when you turn a device on
- outlets or switch plates that feel warm or look discolored
- a buzzing sound coming from outlets, switches, or panels
- circuit breakers that trip often
- a burning smell near outlets or electrical panels



How to prevent electrical overloads:

- Plug major appliances directly into a wall outlet and not a power strip or extension cord.
- Avoid plugging too many high-wattage devices into the same outlet.
- Use only surge-protected power strips with built-in circuit breakers for electronics.
- Never daisy-chain multiple extension cords or power strips together.
- Unplug chargers and devices you're not using to reduce the load.
- Make sure outlets and cords are in good condition and not damaged.
- Know what circuits power which areas and spread out your devices to balance the load.

Electrical overloads are preventable. Pay attention to warning signs, use outlets safely, and never ignore something that doesn't look, sound, or smell right.

Discussion

Why is it dangerous to plug multiple power strips or extension cords into each other?

What should you do if you notice a burning smell or discoloration around an outlet?