

Don't be the one to spoil the fun

Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) has valuable tips for campground owners to keep the public and campers safe this summer

Over the years, Ontario campgrounds and trailer parks have proven to be a good hiding place for electrical hazards that, if undetected, can lead to serious injury, death or property damage. Proactively identifying improperly installed or maintained electrical systems can save lives and protect campground owners from liability and disruption of business.

ESA recommends you visually check your campground's electrical infrastructure and common areas for potential hazards. This includes electrical rooms, pedestals, laundry facilities, equipment associated with pools, games/recreational areas, utility closets, outdoor electrical devices and lighting, and extension cords used by campers.

Top five hazards found in campgrounds

1) Extension/flexible cords used as permanent wiring

Extension/flexible cords are not a substitute for permanent wiring as they are not designed for long-term use. They should not be stapled to structures or run through holes in walls, doors or windows. The insulation on these cords is not durable enough to withstand fastening to structures, repeated pinching or friction, or long-term exposure to weather.

Only permanent wiring that meets section 12 of the Ontario Electrical Safety Code (the Code) should be used to supply power to electrical air conditioning units, accent lighting, wiring to and within utility sheds, ponds, etc.

2) Equipment or wiring that is damaged or not approved for outdoor use

Cords feeding trailers (wires, cables or conduits) should be visually examined and replaced if damaged. Damaged cords can energize metal trailers and other equipment and pose a serious shock hazard. They can also short out an electrical cable and ignite flammable material, like the propane tanks found at most campsites.

3) Burying flexible cords and building cables (NMD)

Flexible cords or NMD cables (standard house wire) must not be buried directly in the ground because they can deteriorate in wet locations, exposing people to fire or shock hazards. Only NMWU (underground-rated wire) or other approved wiring methods for underground installations can be used.

Seasonal trailers should be located as close as possible to the pedestal outlet feeding the trailer to eliminate the need for extension cords or additional protection of the supply cord to the trailer. Relocating pedestals should be considered where they are not conveniently accessible or result in having power cords run over long distances.

4) Underground cables insufficiently buried

Cables installed underground that don't meet proper depth or protection requirements (see Code Rule 12-012) can be damaged by digging with a shovel and pose a shock hazard. ESA does not recommend that campground owners bury cables themselves. All work should be performed by a Licensed Electrical Contractor (LEC) to ensure underground electrical installations are safe.

5) Fuses and breakers exceeding the capacity of the conductors

Fuses and breakers must not exceed the current ratings of the wiring, cables and equipment they protect. A #14 gauge copper wire is rated for 15 amps, #12 gauge wire is rated for 20 amps, and #10 gauge wire is rated for 30 amps. When the breaker or fuse exceeds the wiring or equipment rating, it can cause the wiring to overheat and/or the equipment to fail, increasing the possibility of a fire.

Campground owners must have **all electrical hazards repaired** in a timely manner to ensure the safety of the residents, campers and staff. Anytime you undertake electrical work covered by the Code, you need an electrical permit from ESA, and the repairs or electrical work done will be subject to an inspection.

If you aren't sure you have the expertise to spot an electric hazard, consider hiring a licensed electrical contractor. Visit www.esasafe.com to find one in your area.

About the Electrical Safety Authority (ESA)

ESA's role is to enhance public electrical safety in Ontario. As an administrative authority acting on behalf of the Government of Ontario, ESA is responsible for administering specific regulations related to the Ontario Electrical Safety Code, the licensing of Electrical Contractors and Master Electricians, electricity distribution system safety, and electrical product safety. ESA works extensively with stakeholders on education, training and promotion to foster electrical safety across the province. More information on the Electrical Safety Authority can be found on its website, www.esasafe.com, through Twitter @HomeandSafety and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ElectricalSafetyAuthority