

ELECTRICAL HOME SAFETY BRIEF

LOSSES

Navy and Marine Corps losses involving for FY 91 include 2 fatalities.

BACKGROUND

A review of electrical home mishaps shows a variety of factors are involved in the typical mishap. Identifying electrical hazards such as improper misuse of polarized plugs, three-pronged or three-pronged outlet adapters, worn cords and plugs, replacing fuses, rugs placed over extension cords, overloaded outlets and extension cords, appliances used around water or other objects around power lines is the first step for risk assessment and risk management process.

EXAMPLES

The following examples are typical electrical home mishap reports received at the Naval Safety Center:

- a. AT1 was working on household electrical wiring when he received an electrical shock. He fell from the ladder and sustained a fatal head injury.
- b. LT was working on a boat pier behind his home using a pair of pliers. He was standing in the water when his pliers came into contact with an energized electrical circuit. He was electrocuted.
- c. Service member was sitting in a chair flying a kite. The wind suddenly shifted direction and kite string drifted over the power lines. He does not remember the kite string striking the power lines. Service member suffered electrical burns to hand, both feet and his shoulder.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Assessing the risks along with making risk decisions and implementing controls to eliminate electrical home mishaps are as follows:

- a. Install ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) in basement, kitchens and bathroom circuits.
- b. Stand on a dry surface when replacing a fuse.
- c. Never operate an electrical appliance while touching a metal object, standing on a wet surface or taking a bath.
- d. Always unplug appliances before cleaning, removing parts and when not in use.
- e. Check electrical cords and extension cords regularly for signs of damage.
- f. Use a non-conductive ladder such as fiberglass or wood when working on electrical systems or near power lines.
- g. Use only UL approved appliances. Never cut off the ground plug.
- h. Avoid flying kites near power lines or during wet weather conditions.
- i. Never place an extension cord under a rug or in heavy traffic areas.