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PSE&G Offers Electricity Safety Tips *May is National Electric Safety Month*

(Newark, N.J. – May 2, 2016) In the United States, on average 400 people die from electrocution and 4,400 are injured each year. Most of these deaths and injuries can be prevented. May is National Electric Safety Month and Public Service Electric and Gas Company (PSE&G), New Jersey's largest utility, takes this opportunity to remind customers of a dozen ways to avoid electrical safety hazards.

1. **Never handle electric appliances with wet hands:** Electricity and water don't mix. Do not handle electric appliances with wet or damp hands, and never use electric appliances in wet or damp conditions unless the appliances are specifically rated for this use.
2. **Secure electric sockets around toddlers and babies:** Toddlers can easily insert objects into electric outlets that are not covered properly. All outlets within reach should be protected with plastic closures that fit snugly and cannot be removed easily.
3. **Eliminate defective or worn electric wires:** Inspect all appliances and extension cords regularly to ensure that they are in good condition. Cords should not be loose or frayed and should have a grounding prong intact if so equipped.
4. **Never pour water on an electric fire:** Water acts as a conductor and can cause shock. You must use a fire extinguisher that is rated as Class C for use on electric fires.
5. **Leave wiring to the professionals:** Proper electric wiring for any building is critical and must meet codes and standards of safety. Employ the services of a licensed professional who can do the job safely and correctly.
6. **Watch for overheating bulbs and lights:** Lights and bulbs can be sources of heat and must be kept away from flammable materials, including upholstery, drapes, lampshades, bedding and cribs. Never exceed the maximum wattage specified for the device. Consider replacing bulbs with a lower wattage bulb.
7. **Never work on electric equipment with the power on:** When doing work on electric equipment, ensure that all sources of electricity to the appliance are turned off. When working on or near outlets, overhead lights, or cutting into drywall, be sure to shut off the correct breaker. A simple voltage tester can be purchased for home use at a local electrical supply store. Making contact with household currents can result in death or severe burns.
8. **Don't misuse extension cords:** Never use extension cords as a permanent substitute for additional outlets. Also, never overload extension cords. Discard them if they have worn out wires or loose connections.

9. **Check for covered cords and wires:** Electric wires and cords radiate heat. Never cover wires with rugs or furniture. They could overheat and start a fire.
10. **Protect electric outlets close to sources of water:** Electric outlets in bathrooms, kitchens, laundry rooms and garages should be ground fault circuit interrupting (GFCI) outlets to reduce the chance of electric shock. GFCI outlets are required around pools and spas. Arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCI), especially in homes with aging wiring systems, can also be added to enhance protection from fires.
11. **Keep ladders at least 10 feet from power lines:** When working outside of your home, always make sure that, if the ladder fell, it would not contact any power lines or other electrical equipment.
12. **Never touch a downed power line or go near one:** Always assume the power line is live. Immediately call PSE&G at 800-436-PSEG (7734) or your local utility to report downed wires.

To learn more about potential electrical hazards and how to use electricity safely, contact the Electrical Safety Foundation International at www.esfi.org.

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