

# ◇ AROUND THE HOUSE ◇

## CERAMIC COOK TOP STAINED?

**BROWN STAINS ON CERAMIC COOK TOPS ARE THE RESULT OF BURNED-ON FOOD DEPOSITS FROM SPILLS OR FROM BOILING OVER. FOOD PARTICLES EMBEDDED IN THE UNDERSIDES OF POTS AND PANS CAN ALSO MAKE BROWN STAINS**

**YOUR COOKWARE SHOULD BE SCRUBBED ON THE BOTTOM AFTER EACH USE. FOOD SPILLS SHOULD BE CLEANED UP IMMEDIATELY AND THE ENTIRE SURFACE CLEANED AFTER EACH USE. USE ONLY A CLEANER RECOMMENDED BY YOUR COOK TOP OWNER'S MANUAL.**

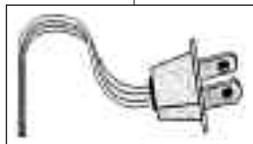
**THE BOTTOMS OF YOUR COOKWARE SHOULD BE FLAT AND FLUSH WITH THE SURFACE OF YOUR COOK TOP TO PROVIDE BETTER HEAT TRANSFER.**

## *Electrical Safety Around the Home*

Home is where the heart is, says the old adage. Unfortunately, homes are also where the hazards are.

The following is a list of potential electrical fire hazards along with ways to correct the problems:

1. Extension cords are typically smaller than the amperage rating of the permanent wiring that they extend. This can cause the wire to heat up long before the fuse blows or circuit breaker is tripped.
2. Extension cords should not be put below carpeting due to possible damage. Nor should they be installed permanently because they could be damaged by the staples, etc. This feel of "permanence" could create an atmosphere where it could be used for appliances that will overload the wire. Extension cords should not be installed through floors or walls because of their vulnerability to damage.
3. Wire splices should only be installed in prescribed boxes and mechanically secured. Exposed splices may



become loose and cause arcing and excessive heat and deterioration.

4. Service entrance cables with deteriorated outer coverings will allow water to enter and may follow the cables into the meter socket and possibly into the main panel box. This will cause corrosion. It may also cause circuit breakers to freeze in the "closed" or "on" position. This is a significant fire hazard. The service entrance cable should be replaced when the outer covering is deteriorated.
5. Broken or loose switches and outlets should be replaced because their dependability is suspect and the occupants may be exposed to shock.
6. Breaking or cutting off of the ground prong of a three-prong plug will not affect the operation of the appliance. However, it does compromise the safety of the user.
7. Dimmer switches should be checked for excessive heat. The rating of the dimmer should always be higher than the total wattage of the bulbs it

serves. Dimmers with ratings 50 percent to 100 percent above the total bulb wattage are desirable.

8. Light fixtures and related shades and covers can deteriorate quickly if the bulbs used in the fixture are larger than the fixture rating. Fires can result.
9. Circuit breakers that will not trip or are "buzzing" are a problem. It may be related to moisture, corrosion or inexpensive or incompatible equipment, but it must be corrected as soon as possible.
10. Electrical equipment, wiring, panels and fixtures should never be installed in areas with excessive relative humidity unless the equipment is designed for this use. These situations are a significant safety hazard and should be addressed as soon as possible.
11. Incandescent lighting close to clothes or other combustibles in closets may create a fire hazard. Bulbs should have covers and should be a minimum of 12" from combustible material.
12. Fuses and circuit breakers have nothing to do with electricity. Their only purpose is to protect the wire that they are attached to by



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**In This Issue...**

## **Electrical Safety in the Home**

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***“Incandescent lighting close to clothes or other combustibles in closets may create a fire hazard.”***

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keeping it from overheating. Over-sized fuses or circuit breakers do not enhance the electric

circuitry or the equipment they serve. Fourteen-gauge wire is rated for 15 amps. Use no more than a 15-amp circuit breaker or fuse. Twelve-gauge wire is rated 20 amps. Ten-gauge wire is rated 30 amps. Some people may be under the impression that the larger

fuse/circuit breaker will allow that line to hold more. The integrity of the wire is compromised from overheating. The entire

circuit is compromised, not just at a fixture or connection. This should never be allowed to happen. If it does, it should be corrected as soon as possible.

Other areas of concern include double-wired circuit breaker, reversed polarity at outlets, ungrounded outlets, the lack of ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) at wet areas, and miscellaneous workmanship compromises. These are all safety-related situations and should be addressed. A licensed electrician

can evaluate your system, locate problem areas and be able to offer you options.

*Tip of the Month:*

To remove stains on ceramic floor tiles from minerals in standing water from planters, spills, etc., apply a poultice made of a paper towel soaked in vinegar. Keep the poultice in place for a day or two and then rinse with warm water.