Beware of Counterfeit Products

A "fake" purse or watch may make you angry, but they don't carry the risk of injury or death. On the other hand, counterfeit electrical products can be dangerous. Counterfeit circuit breakers, power strips, extension cords, batteries, and holiday lights can cause fires, explosions, shocks, and electrocutions.

In recent years, the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has recalled more than 1 million counterfeit electrical products, including circuit breakers that did not trip when overloaded, cell phone batteries without a safety device in the circuitry to prevent overcharging, and extension cords with mislabeled, undersized wiring that overheated.

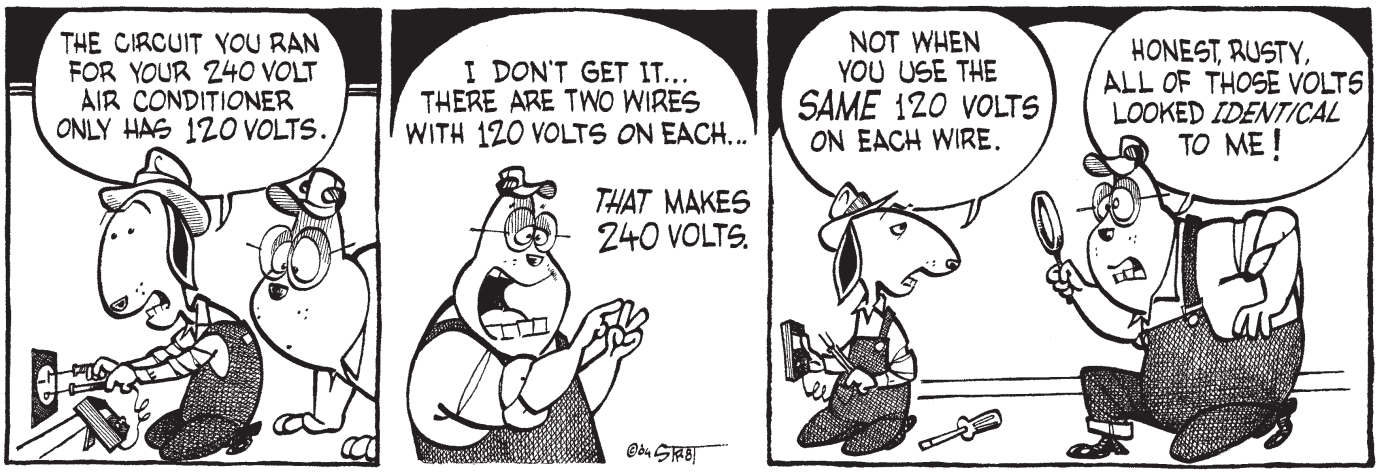
Counterfeits can be extremely difficult to spot. They could be a knock-off of a name brand product, or bear an unauthorized certification marking. Here are some tips to protect yourself from the dangers of counterfeit electrical products:

- Scrutinize the product, packaging, and labeling. Look for certification marks from the manufacturer and an independent testing laboratory—such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL) or the Canadian Standards Association (CSA). Trademarked logos that look different than usual may signal a counterfeit.
- If the price is "too good to be true", it could be because the product is inferior and unsafe.
- Be careful when buying from an unknown source, such as a street vendor. Use established stores who purchase their goods from legitimate distributors and genuine manufacturers.
- Check the warning label. It should be free of grammatical errors and not conflict with information elsewhere on the package.
- Avoid no-name products.
- Look for the name and contact information of the manufacturer. If you find the information missing, consider purchasing electrical products elsewhere.
- Visit www.cpsc.gov to stay informed about product recalls.

Certified Safe

CME received this certificate from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) in honor of achieving national "safety-accredited" status for 2007. Receiving and maintaining this status requires a lot of extra commitment, training and documentation, but knowing that our crews are dedicated to the public's safety as well as their own is worth the extra effort. Accreditation is reviewed every three years.

Murphy



Maintain Fridge for Peak Performance

You probably use your refrigerator more than any other appliance, so take care of it! Keep your fridge in good working order. Here are some tips:

Vacuum the condenser coils in the back or bottom of the fridge every three months. This will keep it working at peak efficiency. Door gaskets should be snug to keep cold air in. Check the door seal and replace it or adjust it if necessary.

Do not store uncovered liquids in the refrigerator. They give off vapors that make the unit work harder. Allow hot foods to cool before placing them in the fridge, but don't leave perishables unrefrigerated for more than two hours.

When cooking, remove all of your refrigerated ingredients at once so you don't have to keep opening the fridge door.

Don't put a second refrigerator in the garage unless the unit is specifically built for that use. The temperature change in an unheated space can damage the appliance or make it work too hard. Instead, store your extra unit in the basement.

Ask Us About Energy Star Bonus Rebates!

Installing a heat pump in the near future? In addition to standard rebates from CME and East River Electric, receive a $200 BONUS rebate if your system is "Energy-Star" rated!

Answers from the "Stop Energy Leaks" Guy

• What uses the most energy in my home?

Heating and cooling systems typically consume the most energy in your home, followed closely by refrigerators and clothes dryers. But don't underestimate the power of the small electronics in your home. Televisions, computers, cordless phones, and answering machines will still draw electricity even if they are turned off or on standby mode. According to Energy Star, idle electronics consume the same amount of power every year as the output of 17 power plants in the United States.

• If I turn my heat down during the day when I'm not home, won't I use more energy heating the house back up when I come home?

Turning your heat down a few degrees during the day will cut down the number of heating cycles your systems runs while you are at work. The money and energy you will save during those eight hours will be more than you will use when you turn the thermostat back up. The same goes for turning your thermostat back overnight, while you're tucked under the covers!

• Should I add insulation to my basement or crawl space?

Most people don't think to insulate crawl spaces and unfinished basements because they are unoccupied. But, according to the Dept. of Energy, an uninsulated foundation can result in significant heat loss. A certified energy auditor can help you determine how much insulation you need, or visit the Dept. of Energy's website to determine the R-value and how much you should add.

visit www.stopenergyleaks.com for more tips