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Avoid Outdoor Electrical Hazards

One of the sure signs of spring is a large jump in the number of people performing work outside, whether at work or around their homes.

The Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) is encouraging people to not be so enthusiastic about getting back outside that they fall victim to electric shock.

Thousands of workers are injured or killed every year by electrical hazards—the sixth-leading cause of all occupational fatalities in the United States.

Following are five tips that workers should know to reduce their risks for electrical shock injury or death, courtesy of ESFI:

1. Water and electricity don't mix. Avoid damp conditions, including wet grass, when using electricity.
2. Ladders, even wooden ones, when carried upright can contact power lines, often with fatal results.
3. Outdoor power tools and appliances must be unplugged when not in use.
4. Power tools and appliances must be inspected for frayed cords, broken plugs and cracked or broken housings. If problems are found, these devices need to be repaired or replaced.
5. Ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) should be used on outdoor outlets. Portable GFCIs are available from most hardware and home improvement stores.

The construction industry alone experiences about 44 percent of workplace electrical fatalities, according to the National Safety Council (NSC).

Contact with electric current from machines, tools, appliances, light fixtures or electrical wiring is a major cause of injuries and time away from the job, according to the NSC. Large appliances cause 34 percent of consumer-related electrocutions.

Nine percent of consumer-related electrocutions involved ladders coming into contact with power lines, while another seven percent involved gardening, lawn and farm equipment.

Safety Tip: **Whether working construction or working around your home, taking steps to avoid some of the primary causes of electrocution and injuries can help keep you safe.**

