Homes today are brimming with state-of-the art technology, entertainment and computer equipment. However, when too many lights and appliances are attached to the electrical system, it will overload and then overheat. The heat causes the wire insulation to melt and ignite, resulting in an electrical fire.

OVERLOADED ELECTRICAL OUTLETS ARE ONE OF THE MAJOR CAUSES OF RESIDENTIAL FIRE DEATHS.

Two-thirds of all electrical fires begin in plugs or cords on appliances such as refrigerators, air conditioners or lamps. Frayed cords expose the electrical wires that spark on contact with each other or anything that can ground the electrical current.

MOST ELECTRICAL FIRES CAN BE PREVENTED.

Take the proper safety measures and regularly check your electrical appliances, cords and outlets:

✓ Use light bulbs with the appropriate wattage for the size of the light fixture. A bulb of too high wattage may lead to overheating and fire.

✓ Protect all electrical cords from damage. Do not run cords under carpets or rugs, around objects or hang from nails.

✓ When purchasing electrical cords or appliances, be sure that the equipment that has the Underwriters Laboratories (UL) Mark. The UL mark shows that the product has been safety tested.

✓ Inspect appliances regularly to make sure they operate properly. If an appliance begins to operate with a different smell, or makes unusual sounds or the cord feels warm to touch, pull the plug and discontinue use. If burning or smoking occurs from the appliance, call the Fire Department (911).

✓ Never use an appliance with a damaged cord. Be sure to use three-pronged electrical devices in three pronged outlets. If three-prong outlets are not available in your home, purchase a three-prong adapter from any hardware store.

✓ Give televisions, stereos and computers plenty of air space clearance so they won't overheat.

✓ To prevent overloading, never plug more than two appliances into an outlet at once or "piggyback" extra appliances on extension cords or wall outlets. Use only outlets designed to handle multiple plugs.

✓ Unplug appliances such as toaster ovens, hair dryers, flat irons and coffee pots when not in use.

✓ Check outlets and switch plates to make sure they are not unusually hot to the touch. If they are, immediately unplug the cords from these outlets and do not use the switches. Have a qualified licensed electrician check the wiring as soon as possible.

✓ Special attention should be given to large appliances that use high wattage, such as air conditioners, refrigerators, irons, microwave ovens, dishwashers, and deep fryers. Avoid plugging them into the same outlet or circuit.

DON'T DELAY!
CALL THE FIRE DEPARTMENT 911

A Public Fire Safety Message From The New York City Fire Department

YOUR SAFETY IS OUR MISSION
PROUDLY SERVING NEW YORK SINCE 1865
The preparation of the home cooked meal is the leading cause of home fires and fire injuries. Unattended cooking accounts for 33% of these fires. Other leading causes are placing combustible items too close to the heat source and various electrical defects.

There are a variety of situations that lead to unattended cooking fires. The most common is when the cook becomes distracted and leaves the kitchen. The most common distractions are attending to children, answering phone calls, watching television and answering doorbells.

In order to drastically reduce your risk of a cooking fire, follow this recipe for safety:

While cooking,

- stay in the kitchen, don't leave cooking food unattended. (stand by your pan!)
- wear short or tight fitting sleeves. (Long loose sleeves are more likely to catch on fire or get caught on pot handles)
- don't become distracted.
- enforce a "kid-free zone" of 3 feet around your stove. Turn pot handles inward facing the wall to prevent burns caused by overturning or spills.
- keep the area around the stove clear of towels, papers, pot holders or anything that could burn.
- cook at indicated temperatures settings rather than higher settings.
- regularly clean your cooking equipment so that there are no cooking materials, food items or grease accumulation.
- have a pot lid handy to smother a pan fire. Do not attempt to pick up the pot or pan. Shut off the heat and cover the fire with a lid.
- Do not use water. It will cause splashing and spread the fire.

In case of fire...
Call the Fire Department

use the nearest fire alarm box or Dial 911

Remember:
By planning ahead, you can do a lot to prevent a fire. But once a fire starts in your home, there are only three things to do: first get out, close the door behind you, then call 911 from a neighbor's home. Don't go back into a burning building, no matter what. If you think someone is trapped inside, tell the firefighters when they arrive.