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HOUSEHOLD

Handy Hints for The Household



CIRCUIT BREAKERS: After fitting a circuit breaker you'll never have to rewire another fuse. That's because a circuit breaker cuts off the power before a circuit becomes dangerously overloaded. Then, after the fault has been fixed you can simply switch them back on.

MENDING A FUSE: Turn off master switch at fuse box. Remove and return each fuse plug to locate problem. Then, remove the burnt out wire and replace with a length of 8amp (lights) or 15 amps (power) fuse wire. Tighten screws over wire, snip off excess and replace repaired plug in socket and turn power back on.

INSTALLING SMOKE ALARMS: For your family's safety, it is important to install smoke alarms. Establish the number of alarms needed and where they'll be installed. Then determine which alarms are best suited for that area. Use products that carry local standards approved symbol.

CLEANING GLASS LIGHTING: Cover the floor underneath the light fitting with a sheet or towel. Take care not to wet the actual light and use detergent and bleach applied with a soft rag. Then wipe clean with a linen serviette to give it added sparkle.

REFRIGERATOR MAINTENANCE: Wash and dry the inside regularly using only small amounts of detergent. Finish off with a cloth dipped in vinegar to prevent mildew. A quarter of a cup of ammonia mixed with cold water in a spray bottle helps clean the refrigerator exterior and waxing will prevent soiling.

MENDING GLASSWARE: Before repairing glass, the broken pieces need to be roughened a little with a diamond scratch to provide a better "key" for adhesive. Use very fine sandpaper or an emery board to smooth out chips on the rim of a glass and squeeze toothpaste onto a soft cloth to remove any minor scratches.

CLEANING MILDEW: Light stains on fabric may be washed out in the laundry. You could also try soaking in diluted bleach, rubbing with a cut lemon dipped in salt or dabbing with hydrogen peroxide. Keep moist until the spots fade, rinse and wash as usual.

CHANGING A POWER LEAD PLUG: Remove the cover and push it up the cord. Loosen the screws on the terminals and remove wires, noting their position. Cut the cord off clean before removing the outer plastic to expose the three wires. Twist each wire together and connect to correct terminal, tighten screws and replace cover.

FIXING A FLOURESCENT TUBE: Firstly, turn off light at switch. To test it starter is faulty it needs to be removed and fitted with another. If the problem remains, check the pins at the end of the tube for corrosion or damage. A light sanding with fine sandpaper will remove corrosion and pliers can be used to straighten bent pins.

HOME FIRE SAFETY: If fire breaks out get all the family together and leave the house at once, closing as many doors and windows as possible on the way. Where there is heavy smoke stay low because smoke is less dense closer to the ground where the temperature is lower.

HOME SECURITY: Never leave keys hidden outside the house and it's a good idea to leave a spare set with your neighbour. Lock away ladders and tools that

could be used in a burglary and install movement activated lights to deter thieves.

LADDER SAFETY: When using a ladder always make sure both the legs are evenly placed on the ground. Use wide timber chocks to even up the ladder on sloping surfaces and if possible, nail the chock to the floor to prevent it slipping. Take care around power lines when putting a metal ladder up or down.

INSTALLING A DEADLOCK: A double cylinder deadlock is generally accepted as the most secure of all locks. Install one that has a strike flange to protect the door jamb and solid steel pin that cannot be forced.

AVOID ELECTRIC SHOCK: Avoid overloading a circuit with too many adapters, which could cause a short and look after cords to prevent damage. And always make sure your hands are dry before touching any electrical equipment, plugs or sockets

POOL MAINTENANCE: Before starting up for summer check your water test kit and buy new bottles of liquid reagents because they only last one season. Switch on the pump, check your pool's filters for holes and tears and discard old cartridges.

CEILING FAN WOBBLER: Check that the fan blades aren't out of balance by clipping a clothes peg mid-way along the leading edge of each blade, one at a time. Turn the fan on to a low speed and see if the added weight stops the wobble. When successful, replace peg with adhesive-backed lead-weighted tape.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT NAIL: Choose a nail that is twice as long than the timber being held. Ensure that the nail is not longer than the combined thickness of the timber being nailed together.