

New Outlets Protect Small Children

Inquisitive youngsters with little fingers are constantly exploring the world around them. Sometimes their curiosity can connect them with danger.

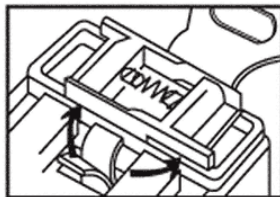
Each year 2,400 children - an average of seven children per day - are treated in emergency rooms for injuries caused by inserting objects into electrical outlets, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety

Commission. Eighty-nine percent are under the age of six, with the highest risk group being boys age two to three. Most often these accidents happen at home with everyday household items such as hairpins, keys, and paperclips. Injuries vary from minor to serious burns, and some contacts prove fatal.

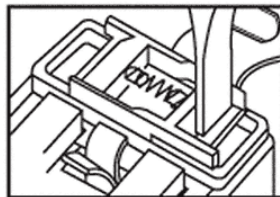
As part of the new “Teach Learn Care” TLC campaign, Safe Electricity urges parents and other caregivers protect young children by using tamper resistant electrical outlets. A new change in the National Electrical Code (NEC) for 2008 also addressed the issue of outlet safety. Tamper-resistant receptacles have been used in hospital pediatric wards for over 20 years and the new NEC Code requires their installation in all new construction of single- and multi-family homes.

“While plastic outlet caps offer an inexpensive form of protection, some toddlers and pre-school age children can manage to remove them,” says Molly Hall, executive director of Safe Electricity, “and adults often forget to replace the caps after using an outlet, leaving it open for young fingers to explore. The new tamper-resistant outlets offer constant protection.”

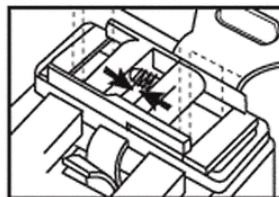
Tamper-resistant receptacles have built-in shutter systems that prevent single-pronged objects like hairpins from being inserted. Unlike plastic outlet caps, the new receptacles are permanent, automatic, and reliable. They install just like standard outlets and are only slightly more expensive to purchase.



Thermoplastic shutter in closed position covers access to contacts.



Insertion of object in any one side does not open shutter.



Two-bladed plug or grounding plug compresses spring and simultaneously opens both shutters.

The new receptacles do not replace ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) and should be used in conjunction with them. GFCIs sense the leakage of current to ground and immediately shut off power, preventing electrocution. Devices with both components are available and should be used in any areas where moisture is an issue, such as bathrooms, kitchens, and basements.



Tamper-resistant receptacle