May is Electrical Safety Month

May is Electrical Safety Month and includes both Memorial Day and the beginning of summer, which normally means a lot of summer fun in our favorite bodies of water such as pools, lakes and beaches. Of course, these are not normal times, and while the COVID-19 pandemic leaves summer plans uncertain right now, we know for sure that electrical safety is of the utmost importance when there is a body of water within twenty feet of any electrical wiring or equipment.

Always put safety first and look at the requirements in the 2017 NEC, article 553, 555, 680 and 682, depending on the area, then apply the special requirements required for that type of body of water for safety first.

Owners should have a licensed electrical contractor with licensed electricians trained in that area of electrical safety perform an inspection, and complete any electrical work required in the 2020 NEC for electrical safety around that body of water.

New pool electrical installation must be done by a licensed electrical contractor with licensed electricians, and pool electrical maintenance must be done by a licensed electrical contractor with licensed electricians or a residential appliance installer. Electrical contractors, electricians, and residential appliance installers should not do any of this type of electrical work until they have had the proper training in the area of that type of body of water.

With summer here let’s have fun, but always stay safe when it comes to electrical safety and water.

Summer Safety Tips

Please consider these key safety points to keep everyone safe this summer:

- Before using an outdoor electrical outlet, check to make sure the receptacle is protected with a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) and that the GFCI is working properly. You can test the GFCI by pushing the test button on the receptacle or on the breaker inside the electrical panel. If the GFCI isn’t working properly, hire a licensed electrician to fix it.
- Any electrical wiring that is within 20 feet of a swimming pool should have protection from a ground fault circuit interrupter, including underwater luminaries (pool lights).
- Make sure overhead electrical lines do not pass over the pool. In fact, it’s best to keep a pool at least 25 feet away from power lines in all directions.
- Allow at least 18 feet of clearance between overhead power lines and a diving board, deck, platform, slide, or observation area. Never build an in-ground pool or set up an above-ground pool over underground electric cables.
- Pools and pool decking should be installed at least 5 feet away from all underground utility lines.
- Except for specially designed lighting fixtures, don’t put electrical fixtures or receptacles within 5 feet of a pool.
- Be sure to comply with any local building codes that may provide more stringent guidelines than the ones that have been listed.
Electrical Safety & Licensing Advisory Board

The nine-member Electrical Safety and Licensing Advisory Board meets at least twice each year in Austin at TDLR's North Campus location. Meeting agendas are posted online prior to each meeting, and email notifications are sent to all Electricians program email subscribers.

The meetings are streamed live online via YouTube, and past meetings of the Board are archived and available on TDLR's YouTube page.

The Board last met on January 8, 2020 in Austin. Watch the meeting here.

At this time, all board meetings are on hold due to COVID-19 in accordance with social distancing and safety guidelines. Watch the TDLR Meetings page for announcements when meetings are scheduled.