

BRIGHT IDEAS

A monthly newsletter for customers, May 2006

BELD
Braintree Electric
Light Department
and
BELD Broadband

May is National Electrical Safety Month—a perfect time to address potential electrical hazards in the home

Installing a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) in every home and workplace could prevent nearly 70% of the electrocutions that occur each year

A GFCI—whether an electrical receptacle, a circuit breaker, or a portable device—is a safety device that trips an electrical circuit when it detects ground faults or leakage currents. Of the estimated millions installed nationwide, many are the standard wall or receptacle-type—especially suitable for cord-connected appliances and equipment used outdoors or near water.

Circuit breakers aren't enough

Some homeowners may question the need for GFCI receptacles, believing that the circuit breakers or fuses in their electrical panel box provide all the protection they need. But circuit breakers are designed to protect homes from an electrical fire caused by overheated wires. **GFCIs, on the other hand, are designed to protect people from potentially fatal electrical shocks.**

GFCIs work by comparing the current on the “hot” lead (the wire carrying the current into the receptacle) and the current on the “neutral” lead (the return wire). If the currents are mismatched, it means current is leaking somewhere along the circuit. **When a leak is detected, the GFCI will shut off the power almost immediately, virtually eliminating the risk of electrocution.**

GFCIs must be tested regularly

Voltage surges from lightning and other sources take their toll on GFCIs and can render them inoperative. Industry studies suggest that as many as 10% of those in use

may be damaged. Yet a recent survey found that nearly one-half of U.S. families never test the GFCIs in their homes. The Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) recommends performing a simple test—at least once a month and after storms—to determine if GFCIs are functioning properly.

Testing is simple

To test your GFCIs, follow this simple procedure:

- Push the “reset” button of the GFCI receptacle to prepare the unit for testing.
- Plug a light into the GFCI and turn it on—the light should now be ON.
- Push the “test” button of the GFCI—the light should go OFF.
- Push the “reset” button again—the light should again turn ON.

The light should go out when the test button is pushed. If the light does not go out, the GFCI is not working or has been installed incorrectly. If the reset button pops out during the test but the light does not go out, the GFCI may have been improperly wired. In this case, the receptacle may have been damaged and does not offer shock protection. Contact a qualified electrician to check the GFCI and correct the problem.

Eliminating electrical hazards begins with education and awareness. A focus on electrical safety at home and in the workplace can prevent hundreds of deaths and thousands of injuries each year.

Clogged clothes dryer vents can cause big problems

While checking your home for electrical hazards this month, make sure your dryer vent is not blocked with lint.

Lint is extremely flammable and can cause a fire if it's allowed to build up, so get into the habit of disconnecting the vent pipe and cleaning it out at least once a year.

Plastic dryer vents are a potential fire hazard as well. Plastic is a flammable petroleum product, and plastic vent pipes have been known to catch fire from the heat of the dryer.

Replace the plastic hose with a rigid aluminum pipe vent—it will last indefinitely, it's much safer, and the smooth walls of the pipe provide fewer surfaces to catch dryer lint.

BELD Broadband has added more digital channels

BELD Broadband has expanded its Digital Plus tier! Just \$4.50 a month gets you 10 more of the hottest digital channels. Music lovers will enjoy **MTV Jams** and **MTV Espanol**.

Sports fans can stay up on the latest NCAA matches with **Fox College Sports Atlantic, Pacific and Central**. **Current** is a TV network created by the people who watch it, **Lime** is "Healthy living with a twist," and **i-Life TV** offers practical programs for everyday life that appeal to the whole family.

And BELD Broadband now carries two highly requested Scripps Networks—**DIY** (for do it yourselfers) and **Fine Living** (dedicated to inspiring and empowering people to find the most rewarding ways to spend their time and money).

Contact us at 348-BELD or cservice@beld.net to add Digital Plus to your service today. More channels will be added in the future—stay tuned as we add programmers!



COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

What do you think about open space, natural areas, and recreational opportunities in Braintree?

The Open Space and Recreation Plan committee wants to know. Please take a minute to share your opinion by filling out a short survey that is posted at www.townofbraintree.gov or may be picked up at Thayer Public Library, Town Hall, the Council on Aging, 90 Pond Street, the Parks and Recreation Department, and Pond Meadow Park. Completed surveys can be returned to the Planning and Conservation Department, 90 Pond Street, or put in a return box at one of the above locations.

Spring leaf pickup

Waste Management will pick up leaves and grass clippings **two weeks only: May 15-19 and May 30-June 3** (Memorial Day excluded). For more details, contact the Highway Department at 781/794-8950 or Waste Management at 800/262-5633.

10th Annual BHS All Night Grad Party

The 10th Annual BHS All Night Grad Party, to be held **Saturday, June 3**, will provide a safe, fun environment for our BHS graduates enjoying their last day together. Many families have already generously donated funds, but the cost to organize this annual event is over \$10,000—and **we are in need of additional support**. Please send your tax-free donation to: BHS All Night Grad Party, c/o Laura Hamilton, 61 Windemere Circle, Braintree, MA 02184. (Call 781/843-4347 for info.)

Upcoming Park Department trips

Sunday, June 11: Block Island Day Trip (\$79)
Saturday, June 24: Boston Pops "Sinatra Songbook" at Symphony Hall (\$48, includes

round-trip transportation from Town Hall)
Sunday-Tuesday, June 25-27: Hudson Valley, N.Y./West Point/The Culinary Institute of America (\$399)

Sunday, July 16: Martha's Vineyard day trip (\$99)

Sunday, July 16: American Girl Place, New York City (Moms & girls ages 6+) day trip (\$139, includes luncheon)

Saturday, July 22: Fenway Park tour/Charles River/Cheesecake Factory luncheon, day trip (\$79)

Call the Park Department at 781/794-8901 for more information.

AARP Luncheon June 20

Braintree AARP Chapter #4042 will mark its final meeting of the year with a **luncheon on Tuesday, June 20**, at the D.A.V. Hall, 788 Liberty Street, Braintree. Starting at 1 p.m., the luncheon will be catered by Fasano's and will include entertainment. Tickets are \$20. Call Frank Bocchino at 781/848-4293 for more information.

Dog licenses now available

2006 dog licenses are available **April 15-June 30** at the Town Clerk's office. **Dogs six months or older must be licensed yearly**. If your dog is not already on file, or if its rabies vaccination has expired, please bring proof of the animal's active rabies shot with you. Charges are \$6 for neutered male or spayed female and \$10 for animals not altered. Licenses obtained after June 30 will be assessed a \$15 late fee for each year missed in addition other fees. For additional information (including how to license dogs by mail), call the Town Clerk's Office at 781/794-8241.

BELD is supporting the Braintree community...

...by bringing electrical safety information to the schools. Our program is aimed at 4th and 5th graders and includes a video, a hands-on equipment demo, and a bucket truck ride for a lucky teacher. Contact Ruth Slater at 781/348-1032 for more information.



www.beld.com
150 Potter Road
Braintree, MA 02184
781/348-BELD (2353)

Bright Ideas Editor/Designer
Joan Marson
jmarson@beld.com

PAYMENT LOCATIONS

150 Potter Road

Our office is open from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Customer Service is open until 7 p.m. on Thursday.

Drop boxes

Top of Potter Road & Town Hall.

Braintree Cooperative Bank

1010 Washington St.
372 Washington St.

Direct Payment

Call BELD at 781/348-2353.

Online payments

www.beld.com

BROADBAND HELP DESK

Mon-Fri: 8 a.m.-10 p.m.
Sat-Sun: 8 a.m.-8 p.m.

COMMISSION MEETINGS

Public Meetings are usually held monthly. Call 781/348-2353 or check www.beld.com to confirm time and date.

COMMISSIONERS

Thomas Reynolds, Chair
Anthony Agnitti, Vice Chair
James Regan, Secretary

HOLIDAY CLOSING

Monday, May 29
Memorial Day



Electric tools and water don't mix!

While working in the yard this spring, remember that electric tools—such as clippers, hedgers, and trimmers—should not be used on wet surfaces.

And never mow the lawn with an electric mower if the grass is wet.