

SAFETY

Electric Shock Drowning – The Hidden Danger to Swimmers And Boaters

NewsUSA

(NU) - Before you spend your day at the lake or beach, know that the water may have hidden dangers. Faulty wiring or damaged electrical cords used in docks and boats can cause nearby water to become energized. When a swimmer comes in contact with electrical current, it can cause a loss of muscle control, rapid or irregular heartbeat or even electric shock drowning (ESD).

Electrical shock drowning can occur in both fresh and salt water. However, hazards for swimmers are greater in fresh water systems with lower salt content.

“Electricity can be extremely dangerous when equipment is improperly installed or maintained. Further, normal use of boats and docks can break down the insulation on wiring, leading to electricity leaking into the water,” says Jeff Kuykendall, a product manager at Eaton. “It is critical that electrical equipment and infrastructure used in and around our waterways is regularly maintained by certified electrical contractors and the applicable electrical codes and standards are followed.”

In most recorded electrical shock drowning cases, electrical current leakage originated from faulty wiring or failing electrical equipment in or near boats or docks.

Recent electrical codes and safety standards emphasize the use of Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs) and Equipment Leakage Circuit Interrupters (ELCIs) to help reduce the risk of electrical shock drowning. These devices are designed to help enhance safety by quickly shutting off power if electrical current leakage is detected.

If you own a boat, dock or ma-



rina, contact a certified electrical contractor to address any electrical safety concerns near water. Industry professionals can help maintain or replace equipment and confirm that docks and boats are up to code.

The Eaton Certified Contractor Network (ECCN) can help you locate an Eaton Certified Electrical Contractor who can provide guidance in minimizing the risk of ESD related to your specific site or project needs.

Before swimming in open water, be aware of potential dangers associated with ESD. To help promote safety and reduce the risk of electrical shock:

- Obey “no swimming” signs and pay attention to how you feel in the water.
- If any tingling or numbness should occur while swimming, avoid contact with metal objects.
- Signal for help without inviting others into the water.
- Once you have reached safety, report your experience so that the water can be tested and made safe for others.

To learn more about electrical solutions that enhance safety or to find an Eaton Certified Electrical Contractor near you, visit <http://myhome.eaton.com/>