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## **CALL TOLL-FREE HOTLINE FOR ANSWERS TO ELECTRICAL SAFETY QUESTIONS IN WAKE OF STORMS**

### ***Square D On Call to Aid Hurricane Disaster Victims, Provides Support to American Red Cross***

PALATINE, Ill. – (July 11, 2005) – Home and business owners with concerns about the operation and safety of electrical equipment and systems damaged by recent hurricanes can receive safety advice and technical direction by calling toll-free hotline **1-888-778-2733** to speak with the Square D Customer Information Center (CIC). Experts are on call around the clock to recommend a course of action to safely restore electrical systems.

In addition, the Square D “WE CARE” program is in effect in FEMA declared disaster areas in Alabama, Florida and Mississippi to address public safety issues and support electrical professionals as they repair damaged electrical structures and systems. The company will donate a percentage of revenues from related equipment sales to the American Red Cross to help bring relief and assistance to those in need.

As part of the program, the company will expedite orders for electrical products to help local electrical professionals quickly reestablish electrical systems, according to Dave Petratis, president and C.E.O. “Because of the widespread power outages, home and business owners are slow to assess the actual damage to their electrical equipment,” said Petratis. “You don’t want to wait until power is restored only to find out that your electrical system is too compromised

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to run safely and efficiently. It's especially important for homeowners to turn off their electrical and gas appliances when power goes out to prevent possible fires when power is restored. Electrical equipment that has been water damaged will need to be replaced, so we're doing all we can to make sure our distributor partners have the products available to meet the needs of their customers."

The company is prepared to staff the CIC with as many experts as needed to provide advice to callers impacted by the storms. "It's our duty to share our expertise with anyone who is concerned about safely taking the steps needed to restore electrical power in these difficult circumstances," said Petratis. "We want to ensure that people have the information and professional help they need."

Petratis emphasizes the importance for home and business owners to have qualified electrical contractors or distributors inspect damage, perform necessary repairs and provide other technical support.

### **Electrical Safety Tips for Homes and Businesses**

Following are important safety guidelines for consideration before, during and after storms. Further information about the WE CARE Program can be found at [www.us.squared.com](http://www.us.squared.com).

- Do not plug a portable generator into an outlet or patch it into electrical wiring or connect it directly to a main electrical panel. Doing so could cause fires or cause power to flow into an outside electrical line, endangering persons in the home, neighbors and utility crews working in the area.
- Do not touch a circuit breaker or replace a fuse with wet hands or while standing on a damp or wet surface. Use a dry or non-conductive tool to reset breakers and use only one hand.
- Turn off lights and appliances when power goes out. This helps avoid fire hazards as well as sudden demands on the electric system.
- Turn off the main circuit breaker and all appliances when leaving home during a power outage.
- Stay away from fallen power lines and do not attempt to remove fallen limbs or objects from power lines. Report these situations to your utility immediately.

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- Do not walk or drive through water that may be in contact with downed lines. Report these situations to your utility immediately.
- If a power line falls on your car, assume the line is energized and remain inside the vehicle, blowing your horn for help. (If you are forced to leave your vehicle, jump as far away from the vehicle as you can, landing with both feet together. Be sure that no part of your body touches the vehicle and ground at the same time. Call 911 as soon as possible and don't return to the vehicle until emergency personnel say it's safe.)
- If someone in your home is dependent on medical equipment requiring electricity, arrange for an alternate power source before severe weather strikes.

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### Schneider Electric North American Operating Division

Headquartered in Palatine, Ill., the North American Operating Division of Schneider Electric had sales of \$2.6 billion (U.S.) in 2004. The North American Operating Division is one of four operating divisions of Schneider Electric, headquartered in Paris, France, and markets the Square D, Telemecanique and Merlin Gerin brand products to customers in the United States, Canada and Mexico. In the United States, Schneider Electric is best known by its flagship Square D brand, with Telemecanique becoming increasingly known in the industrial control and automation markets and supported by many Square D distributors. For 100 years, Square D has been a market-leading brand of electrical distribution and industrial control products, systems and services. Schneider Electric is a global electrical industry leader with 2004 sales of approximately \$12.8 billion (U.S.). Visit Schneider Electric on the Internet at:

- Corporate – <http://www.us.schneider-electric.com>
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