

FIRE MARSHAL TOWN OF NEW CANAAN

Fred S. Baker, Fire Marshal
William Dingee, Deputy Fire Marshal
John Pokorny, Fire Inspector
www.newcanaan.info/

Town Hall
77 Main Street
New Canaan, CT 06840
(203) 594-3030
Fax (203) 594-3126

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A problem that is not that uncommon occurred last week that fortunately ended happily for all concerned.

The problem began at a residence when a device plugged into a wall outlet shorted out and created quite a flare-up giving the homeowner grave concern that there might be a fire behind the wall.

The situation was made worse when the homeowner tried to call 911 to report a possible electrical fire (exactly the right thing to do) and the line was dead – no dial tone! The cable modem for her VOIP (voice over internet protocol, commonly call cable telephone) was dead because it was plugged into the same circuit as the shorted outlet that had tripped the breaker!

Just when they thought it could not be any worse they realized they were in an area of town with no cell service so they had to get in their car and *drive* until they received adequate service to call 911!

Fortunately there was no fire and everything was OK and, fortunately, there *is* an easy solution to this problem. A UPS device (uninterruptable power supply, aka battery back-up) can be purchased and the cable modem can be plugged in to provide up to an hour of stand-by power (depending on what else is plugged into the UPS). Problem solved – almost.

Most telephones we have today *also* require electricity so they *also* must be plugged into the UPS or, you should have at least one phone that will operate without being plugged into an outlet.

For further information regarding this issue or any other fire safety issue please contact the New Canaan Fire Marshal's Office at 594-3030.