

Before I answer this month's question a quick and important sidenote. With the arrival of outdoor Christmas Lights season I would like to remind my readers of the importance of properly connecting your outside lights to a correctly wired GFCI outlet . That is the outside plug with the Test and Reset button on it. Before plugging in your lights take a moment to push the test button.

This should cause the re-set button to pop out. Then push the re-set button in firmly which will re-power the receptacle. If this does not happen, your GFCI outlet may be defective and could; when connected to all those pretty lights, be a safety hazard. This kind of plug is there for a reason. Have a qualified electrician replace the defective outlet for a safe and bright holiday season. Now to this month's question.

Question

I recently had a new electric hot water tank installed. It replaced my 20 year old tank that slowly stopped heating the water to an enjoyable temperature. Now that I have a new hot water tank I find that the water is VERY HOT. Is there a way to adjust the temperature, and if so, what is the recommended setting ? C. Smith , Chelsea.

The thermostat of the new tank is more than likely factory set, usually at 140°F. My guess is that your old tank was set at a lower setting and because of its age was probably not achieving that setting and you were use to it. Yes, the temperature of your tank can be lowered however before having your installer return to make the adjustment, and this is not a job for an amateur, consider the facts first.

The recommended temperature of the water in a tank-style water heater varies depending on who is making the recommendation. Safe Kids Canada recommends a temperature of 49°C (120°F), which will reduce the potential for scalding of small children. The Canadian Journal of Infectious Diseases, however recommends a temperature of 60°C (140°F) to prevent the growth of the Legionella bacteria, which is responsible for Legionnaire's disease.

Since electric water heaters are more susceptible to the growth of Legionella bacteria, the temperature should be set at 60°C and mixing valves (which will allow a small amount of cold water to mix with the hot water) installed outside of the water heater to lower the temperatures at the taps to a safe level.

A very Merry Christmas to everyone and a prosperous and happy New Year.

I welcome your questions please forward them to Peter Weeks Home Inspections at PWHI@sympatico.ca or by phone at 613.290.3697.

Peter Weeks has been a Chelsea resident for 16 years. As a general contractor since 1988, he has been doing residential home inspections for about two years. He is an associate member of OAHI (Ontario Association of Home Inspectors), CAHPI (Canadian Association of Home & Property Inspectors) and a member of the BBB. **He is a Qualified and Fully Insured Inspector.** You may Visit his Website at www.pwhomeinspections.com.