

# risk alert

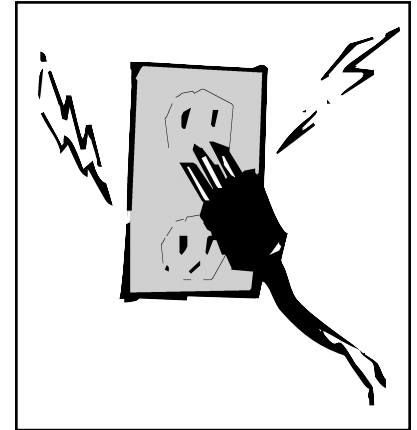


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## Baptistery death gives cause for pause

Baptisteries are usually the scenes of joyful celebrations. But recently a pastor in Texas was killed while performing a baptism. Waist-high in water, he grabbed a corded microphone. The woman being baptized was unharmed.

For those working in electrical contracting, the risk of electrocution is always of paramount concern. The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention report that 400 people die by electrocution each year.



## Water can increase electrocution risk 100 times

According to a report on electrocution from the National Institute For Occupational Safety and Health, the presence of moisture increases the possibility of low-voltage electrocution 100 times.

## Always use a cordless microphone in your baptistery

Baptisteries are meant to be stood in and the full-immersion Baptism is witnessed by all present in the worship center. Microphones are generally used, so all in attendance are able to hear what is being said.

If you need a microphone, always use a cordless model. Never use a hard-wired microphone in a baptistery. There are a variety of wireless microphones that use primarily nine-volt, but also AA, AAA, C and D batteries at a wide range of costs. Transmitters can be worn safely inside the rubber waders worn during the baptism.

If you must use a corded microphone, have it suspended from the ceiling and it should never be handled by anyone in the baptistery.

If you are unsure about the condition of your wiring and grounding, have your facility inspected by an electrical contractor. This is especially important for facilities built 20 or more years ago. The best advice, if you're in water, is never touch anything electrical.

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# Other preventative measures for your baptistery

Other problems can arise around a baptistery.

Fires, slips and falls, drowning and infection can harm or kill people.

Leaks can damage worship centers.

With that in mind, follow these guidelines:

- Use licensed, certified electricians and plumbers for installation and maintenance.
- Prevent slips and falls by making sure proper handrails are installed and there are slip-resistant surfaces on the bottom of the tank and steps.
- Take away the potential for a drowning by keeping the water depth down, building a safety barrier and making sure young children are supervised at all times.
- Make sure that if there are heating elements, they are properly grounded and a thermostatic valve is installed.
- Any electrical outlets nearby should be installed with ground fault interrupters, which are electrical outlets designed to immediately cut power if a fault occurs. They can react to imbalances in the amount of current in as quickly as one-thirtieth of a second.
- Direct connection to the plumbing should not be done unless a back flow preventer is used and the local plumbing inspector consulted. The control valve for the water fill should be within sight of the baptistery if at all possible.
- Inspect for leaks regularly. If the water level is constantly going down, water is going somewhere and could damage property.
- Baptistery water should be filtered every day. Filters should be cleaned when the water is changed.
- Baptisteries should have odorless disinfectant systems that operate when the filter pump is on. Those without this feature should be chemically treated.

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and look in the Safety Resources section.**