

NEWSLETTER

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photo by Marty Katz

Whole Home Surge Protection

By Eric Schreiber

I was recently approached by a neighbor asking about surge protection for the entire home. Immediately, I realized that this was an important topic to which most people, including myself, gave little or no thought. It is particularly relevant to residents of Moreland Courts for reasons that will become clear.

Power surges happen more frequently than we know. Each time one happens, it potentially causes damage to sensitive electronics. These days, our modern appliances are full of integrated circuits that run timers, light LEDs, automatically switch devices on and off, and more. They frequently have Wi-Fi and Bluetooth capabilities. All these circuits are sensitive to power surges outside of their designed voltage range. Cue the surge protector!

There are many causes for power surges, occurring both inside and outside of the home. Anytime there is an abrupt change in the demand for electricity, voltage can spike, potentially damaging sensitive electronics. Inside the home, this is most commonly caused by a large electric motor in a refrigerator or air conditioner, or a washer or dryer turning on or off. Plugging in an electric heater or a toaster can also cause a damaging voltage spike. Outside the home, concerns include lightning, or any abrupt power change or blackout.

So, what can be done? At the individual appliance level, there are power strips of varying quality of surge protection for individual appliances. There are UPS (uninterruptible power supplies) most suitable for computers. This article is about whole home surge protection.



UPS and Computer

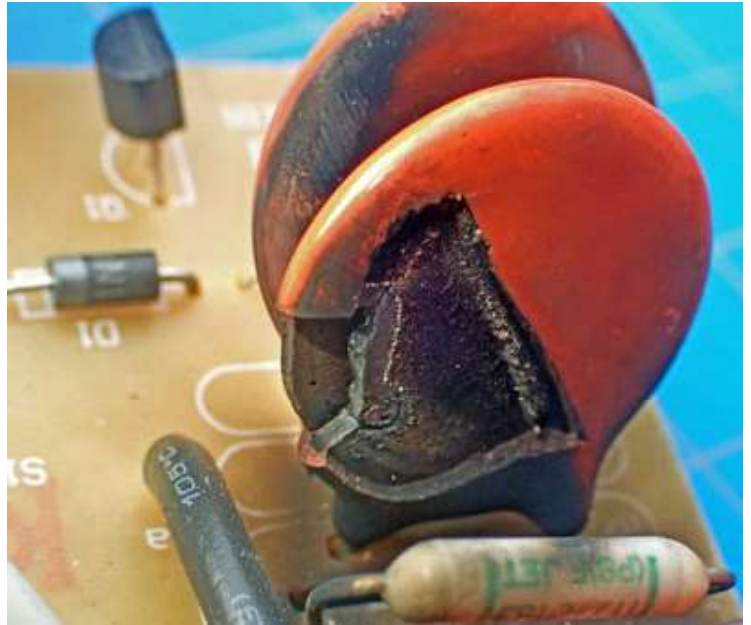


The power supply for a typical Moreland Courts home passes through a panel of circuit breakers inside or near your unit. A surge protector for your whole home will be installed in this panel. It will protect every circuit in your home that passes through that panel. Typically, a small box is easily installed on or in the wall adjacent to the panel. Wires pass from this box into the panel and connect to a device wired into the circuit breaker panel. The installation should be performed by a qualified electrician.

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How does it work? The key component of most surge protectors is the MOV (metal oxide varistor.) When all is well, the MOV has high resistance to electricity. No electricity passes through it even though it is connected between the power lead and the ground lead. HOWEVER, if there is a power surge above the normal voltage, the resistance of the MOV

instantly drops nearly to zero, briefly creating a short circuit so the surge power flows through the MOV to ground rather than to your precious home appliances. For minor surges, this causes no significant harm to the MOV. However, if the surge is huge, the MOV “takes a bullet” to serve its protective duty. If this happens, the good news is your appliances were saved. The bad news is you need to replace your surge protector. The little green light that indicates that all is well will no longer shine.

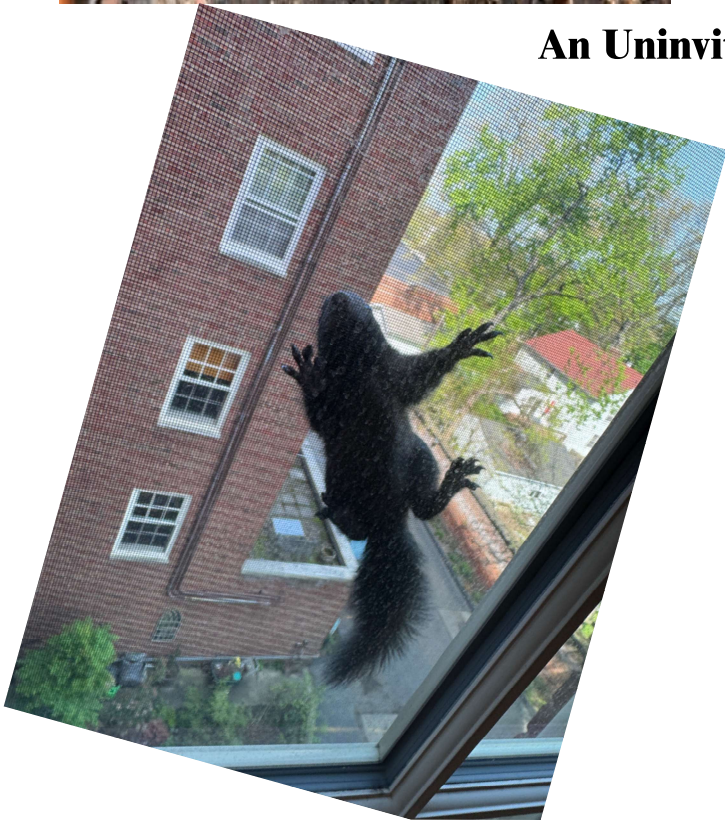


Burnt MOV after taking a large surge



This is the motherboard of a household appliance after taking a hit from a large power surge. If the surge is big enough, it can burn up the integrated circuits of multiple appliances simultaneously. A whole home surge protector is designed to prevent this from happening. The MOV takes the hit instead.

An Uninvited Guest



GRAVITY

By Bill Lang

Gravity. The Law of Gravity. It's been holding things down as long as I can remember. And we have taken it for granted since Newton claimed the apple falling on his head was due to some invisible rays of attractive force between his head and the apple.

And ever since, the evil geniuses of the world have been trying to corral them into an invisible ray gun. Gravity is supposed to determine how the stars, planets, and even galaxies interact. It even changes how light travels through space. Pesky physicists can talk to you all day about how great and wonderful gravity is.

But then you ask one simple question, and they get all defensive: Is gravity, in fact, the weakest force in the universe?

And then, they go all "Yeah, but" on you. "Yeah, but this" and "Yeah, but that." They have all kinds of excuses, like the "I before E except after C" rule with a seemingly infinite number of exceptions.

Gravity? Pure and utter nonsense. Nobody can explain it. It's Newton's addled brain in the time of the Great Plague fictionalizing the world around him.

Here's the proof: The sidewalk is nailed down to keep it from floating away! Go look for yourself! In front of Moreland Courts! And the nail is numbered – someone has to keep track of the nails that prevent the sidewalks from flying away. There's a nail database – call the County Engineer and ask about it. See what excuse they give you: "Yeah, but that's for the surveyors" is pretty much the standard script written in case someone asks, "Aren't those nails preventing the sidewalks from simply flying off the Earth?"



More proof? Shaker Blvd. is nailed down so it doesn't float away! Right there where Shaker Blvd. intersects with Haddam. Haddam doesn't get much traffic, hence, the nail holds it in place.

And last Fall, I found a nail holding the ground down between South Park and Doan Brook. I went out there to take a photo this morning ... and it was gone. Now, I'm worried.

Ask any physicist about the nails. They will act like you're crazy, but I'm sure if they have seen the nails, they'll realize what's going on.



About This Issue

By Eric Schreiber, Editor

Please consider this the Moreland Courts Summertime Newsletter. It is shorter than usual, lacking some of the usual amenities. Back in November 2021, this iteration of the newsletter began as a discussion amongst board members. At the time, a newsletter was being published infrequently under management direction. The decision was made that the newsletter should be restarted as a resident-led endeavor.

The board agreed the newsletter should strive to meet the following objectives:

- provide a forum for regular communication with residents
- to give the board greater visibility among the community
- to foster a sense of community
- to recognize the achievements of residents and staff
- serve as a forum to post upcoming events

A newsletter committee was formed, and the first issue was published in February 2022. We are now up to issue 35.

In keeping with the initial objectives, nearly every issue contained a President's Report, allowing the President of the board to communicate directly with residents. Additionally, the General Manager had the opportunity to report on Moreland Courts from his perspective.

At present, we have a new President of the Board and new board members. We have no General Manager, and an assistant manager is valiantly performing two or three full-time jobs simultaneously. Understandably, writing for the newsletter has not been a top priority.

So, this is a "thin" summer issue. As the situation stabilizes, we can expect to see a return to a more complete newsletter that fulfills those initial objectives.



By Emily Moores

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