**Static Electricity**

All matter is made up of atoms. Atoms are made up of smaller particles called electrons, which are negatively charged. These electrons orbit around a positively charged nucleus. Normally, the negative charges balance the positive charges. The electrons are loosely held in the outer regions of an atom, and can be easily removed and transferred to other objects. This is the phenomenon that creates static electricity.

Static electricity can build up in an object, when one object rubs against another. For example, when you rub a balloon with a cloth, some of the electrons are transferred from the cloth to the balloon. The balloon then becomes negatively charged. Just like with magnets, opposite charges attract and like charges repel. If the charged negatively charge balloon is brought near an uncharged balloon, they will attract each other. If both balloons are rubbed with cloth and, therefore, negatively charged, they will repel each other.

Some objects, such as cloth, are somewhat less stable in their ability to hold onto electrons, and thus, allow the electrons to be transferred to another object such as the balloon. This is due to the loose structure of objects like hair, cloth and wool.

Electrons can transfer from one object to another. However, once the electrons have accumulated on an object, they do not move about, they are static, meaning they are stationary ( they don’t move).