



# SafetyAlert

We're Serious About Safety

## Extension Cord Safety

Electricity causes more than **40,000** fires in the U.S. annually. Electrical fires kill more than **750** people and cause more than **\$1 billion** in property damage annually. The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) estimates about **4,000** extension-cord injuries are treated in hospital ERs. About **half** of those involve fractures, lacerations, contusions, or sprains from people tripping over cords. CPSC also estimates **3,300** fires originate in extension cords each year, killing **50** people and injuring about **270** other.

**The most frequent causes of such cord fires?**  
**short circuits | overloading | damage | misuse**



### POWER STRIPS & SURGE PROTECTORS

Power strips/surge protectors must have built in circuit breakers and be connected directly to a wall outlet – never connected to one another or an extension cord. Device labels must clearly indicate ampere & voltage capacity and approval by a nationally-recognized testing lab. Applied load must be within the acceptable range listed on the device. Light-duty household devices are not appropriate for use in most facilities.



### GROUNDING

Circuits, devices and enclosures must have a permanent and continuous path to ground. Ensure that ground prongs on power cords are intact and have not been broken off or removed. All outlets must have the provision for three prong plugs. Plug adapters should not be used.

If used properly, electrical extension cords are a great way to extend circuits to other worksite areas. Improper use of extension cords is a violation of both the OSHA Code of Federal Regulations and the National Fire Protection Association codes.

### Do

- Use factory-assembled cord sets.
- Use only extension cords that are 3-wire type.
- Use only extension cords marked with a designation code for hard or extra-hard usage.
- Use only cords, connection devices, and fittings that are equipped with strain relief.
- Continually inspect and audit cords at your work site. Immediately take out of service any modified cords or cords not marked for hard or extra-hard use.

The normal wear and tear on extension and flexible cords can loosen or expose wires, creating hazardous conditions. Cords that are not 3-wire type, not designed for hard-usage, or that have been modified, increase your risk of fire and contacting electrical current.

### Don't

- Don't use frayed, cut or damaged cords or ones with exposed inner conductors.
- Don't substitute cords for permanent wiring. They are for temporary applications.
- Don't daisy chain or connect an extension cord to another cord.
- Don't run cords through doorways, windows, holes, floors, ceilings, etc.
- Don't repair cords with electrical tape for any reason. Tape may conceal damage and does not provide the same integrity as the original jacket.



Beacon Mutual offers a variety of training opportunities for employees, supervisors and managers. Please check our seminar schedule for more information.

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