



Extension Cord Safety Talk

There are many simple tools and equipment we use every single day that can cause injury or property damage incidents in the blink of an eye. Extension cords are one example of something we frequently use both at home and at work that can create issues.

According to Electrical Safety Foundation International, extension cords are responsible for:

- About 4,000 injuries each year that are treated in hospital emergency rooms. Half of these injuries involve fractures, lacerations, contusions, or sprains from people tripping over extension cords.
- Roughly 3,300 home fires originate in extension cords each year, killing 50 people and injuring about 270 more.

Practices to Avoid When Using Extension Cords

- Never plug one extension cord into another unless it is allowed by the manufacturer.
- Never let an extension cord sit in water or snow.
- Never run extension cords through walls or holes in a ceiling.
- Never cover extension cords up with rugs or carpet.
- Do not remove the ground prongs of an extension cord and do not use a cord if it is missing a ground prong.
- Do not use indoor cords outdoors.
- Do not place cords in a walkway where it can be tripped over.
- Do not use extension cords in place of permanent wiring.

Best Practices When Using Extension Cords

- Inspect cords prior to use. Look for broken prongs as well as damage to the protective cover that encapsulates the wires inside the cord.
- Only use extension cords that have went through independent testing such as by the Underwriters Laboratory. These cords will have a "UL" marked on them.
- Place cords out of the way and out of conditions that could result in electrocution or damage to the cord.
- When the cord is not being used, unplug it and store it neatly out of the way of foot traffic.

Summary

While an extension cord may seem simple enough to use without thought, there are a lot of do's and don'ts when using them. Do not get complacent when using these cords. Follow the best practices as well as avoid the common unsafe uses listed above to prevent injuries and property damage.

Discussion point:

1. What are some other do's and don'ts involving extension cords?