

Electrical Safety

Employers and employees need to consider an important element of electrical safety in the workplace — safe use of extension cords. The most important thing to remember is that extension cords are for temporary use only. Permanent wiring needs to be installed when use is no longer temporary.

Do

- ☐ Do inspect an extension cord for physical damage before use.
- ☐ Do check the wattage rating on the appliance or tool that the extension cord will be used with; do not use an extension cord that has a lower rating.
- ☐ Do make sure all equipment and extension cords bear the mark of an independent testing laboratory such as UL (Underwriter's Laboratories).
- ☐ Do make sure the plug on an extension cord is fully inserted in the outlet.
- ☐ Do replace an outlet if a plug is too loose in the outlet.
- ☐ Do match up the plug and extension cord on a polarized cord (one hole on the plug is larger than the other).
- ☐ Do keep extension cords away from water.
- ☐ Do use GFCI (Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter) protection when using extension cords in wet or damp environments.
- ☐ Do keep extension cords away from children and animals.
- ☐ Do pull on the plug, not the cord when removing an extension cord from the outlet.
- ☐ Do store extension cords indoors.
- ☐ Do unplug extension cords when not in use.
- ☐ Do keep slack in flexible extension cords to prevent tension on electrical terminals.
- ☐ Do put safety covers on the unused receptacle outlets on extension cords.

Don't

- ☐ Don't use an extension cord marked for indoor use outdoors.
- ☐ Don't plug one extension cord into another.
- ☐ Don't overload cords with more than the proper electrical load.
- ☐ Don't run extension cords through doorways, holes in ceilings, walls, or floors.
- ☐ Don't move, bend, or modify any of the metal parts of the extension cord plug.
- ☐ Don't plug a three-prong into a two-hole extension cord.
- ☐ Don't force a plug into an outlet.
- ☐ Don't use an extension cord when it is wet.
- ☐ Don't overheat an extension cord.
- ☐ Don't cover an extension cord with anything.
- ☐ Don't drive over an extension cord.
- ☐ Don't drag an extension cord.
- ☐ Don't attach extension cords to the wall with nails or staples.
- ☐ Don't run extension cords under rugs or carpets or in high traffic areas.

Source: The Naval Safety Center, Texas Electric Cooperatives, Inc., National Electrical Safety Foundation, Electrical Safety Foundation International and the Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC). The Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation (TDI/DWC) E-mail resourcecenter@tdi.state.tx.us or call 1-800-687-7080 for more information.

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