Stony Brook University

SAFETY TALK

Environmental Health and Safety Newsletter December 2015

Extension Cords

Nothing about an extension cord suggests danger - there are no moving parts, no flames, no noise. It is harmless looking, yet it can be extremely dangerous if misused.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) estimates that each year, about 4,000 injuries associated with electric extension cords are treated in hospital emergency rooms. About half of the injuries involve fractures, lacerations, contusions or sprains from people tripping over extension cords. CPSC also estimates that about 3,300 residential fires originate in extension cords each year, killing 50 people and injuring about 270 others. The most frequent causes of such fires are short circuits, overloading, damage and/or misuse of extension cords.

Most cords used carry regular 110-volt electricity. No doubt at some time you have received a shock from a 110- volt line without serious harm - just a great tingling sensation. But even a 110-volt current can kill. It is not harmless. The conditions, however, must be right. The right conditions may consist of making a good connection with a live wire carrying 110 volts with wet or sweaty hands, and standing or lying on the ground, a wet floor, a water pipe or another electrical connection.

So, protect the extension cords you use. Coil them in large loops, not in close kinked coils. Don't bend them unnecessarily. Don't repair them yourself.

Rules for the safe use of extension cords:

- Inspect all extension cords at the beginning of each workday for any signs of wear or damage. Remove any worn, severely discolored or damaged cords from service immediately.
- Before each use, check the cord for the presence of a ground prong on the male end of the cord.
- Handle the cord gently, avoiding strain, kinking, crushing or cutting.
- String it where it will not be hit or tramped on.
- If moisture, heat or chemicals are present, be sure your cord is the proper type to resist the conditions that are present.
- Extension cords should not be used as ropes to raise and lower tools and materials.
- Never unplug an extension cord by pulling on the cord; pull on the plug.

Date:	
Department:	
Supervisor ***(please print)*****:**	
Supervisor Signature:	
Employee Participants: ***Please Print Clearly***	*Signature*

Environmental Health and Safety

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Supervisor must perform safety talk for the noted month and ensure all employees sign off on this form. Completed form is to be kept on file by department.