



Extension Cord Safety



Extension cords are an essential evil in our lives today. In many cases, we can't seem to live without them. However, we must remember to consider the safety elements involved with their use. **Temporary** is the key word and we should make sure that extension cords are exactly that, for temporary use. If it appears that temporary is becoming permanent, then arrangements should be made to do some permanent wiring to abort the temporary use.

Following are some tips to remember while using the cords temporarily:

Do --

- Inspect cords before each use.
- Check the wattage rating on the appliance that the cord will be used with to be sure that the rating is sufficient for its use.
- Make sure that the plug is fully inserted in the socket and if the plug is loose in the socket, replace the plug or socket whichever is needed.
- Match up the plug and the cord on a polarized cord. (One hole on the plug is larger than the other one).
- Keep extensions away from water and try to use Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCI) around wet and damp conditions.
- Keep the extensions away from children and animals.
- Pull on the plug and not on the cord when removing it from the socket.
- Store extension cords inside.
- Unplug extension cords when not in use.
- Keep slack in the cord when using, so as not to put tension on the terminals.
- Use heavy-duty cords for air conditions, electrical space heaters and freezers.
- Make sure that all extension cords are 3-pronged (grounded.)

Do Not --

- Use extension cords designed for indoor use on outside projects.
- Plug one extension cord into the other.
- Overload the cords with more than the proper load.
- Don't bend or modify any of the metal parts of the extension cord plug.
- Force a plug into an outlet.
- Use an extension in wet conditions.
- Overheat an extension cord.
- Cover an extension cord with any type of material.
- Drive over an extension cord.
- Attach cords to walls with nails or staples.
- Run cords under rugs or carpet.
- Run cords in walkways or high traffic areas.
- Reach into water to get an extension cord without unplugging it first.
- Partially insert a plug into a socket. Secure it flush with the wall and fully connect to the plug.
- Use extension cords on oily, chemical or solvent laden floors that can cause the insulation to deteriorate.
- Use anymore than three sets of lights on one extension cord during the holiday season.

Excerpts: Excerpts: U.S. Naval Center Safety Section - National Electric Safety Foundation. [Ted Gordon](#) is the Risk Management/Loss Control Manager for the Mississippi State University Extension Service and the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station. His office is located in the North Mississippi Research and Extension Center, in Verona, MS; phone number is 662-566-2201.