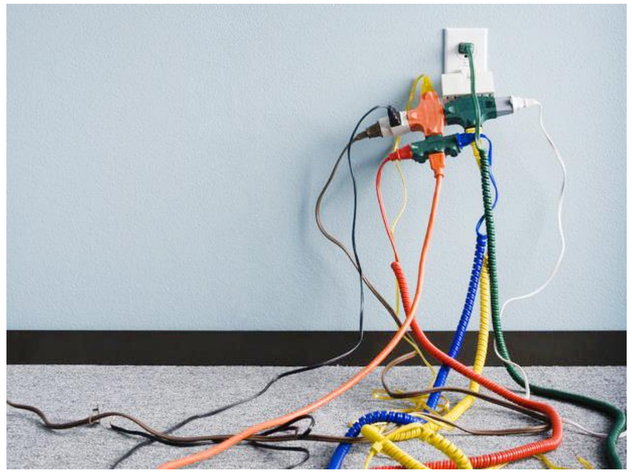
Proper Extension Cord Installation and Safety

Statistic

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) estimates that about 3,300 residential fires originate in extension cords each year, killing about 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.

Extension Cord Safety

- Don’t use extension cords as permanent wiring. This means that extension cords should be used for transient conditions, not for day-in day-out usage.
- Reasons:
  - The extension cord is designed for temporary or short term usage.
  - Continuous usage can cause overheating and the insulation sheath to melt and cord to short circuit.
- Alternatives:
  - Use a power strip or surge protector with UL rating.
  - If possible, arrange items closer to outlet.



Don’t connect an extension cord/surge protector to each other to provide additional length.

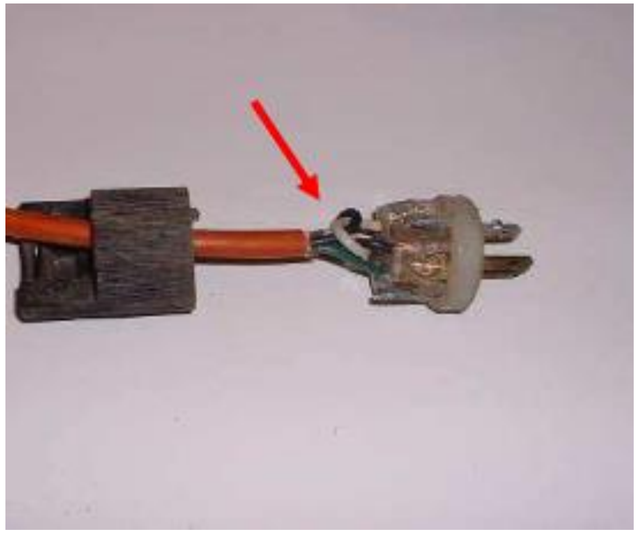
Extension Cord Safety

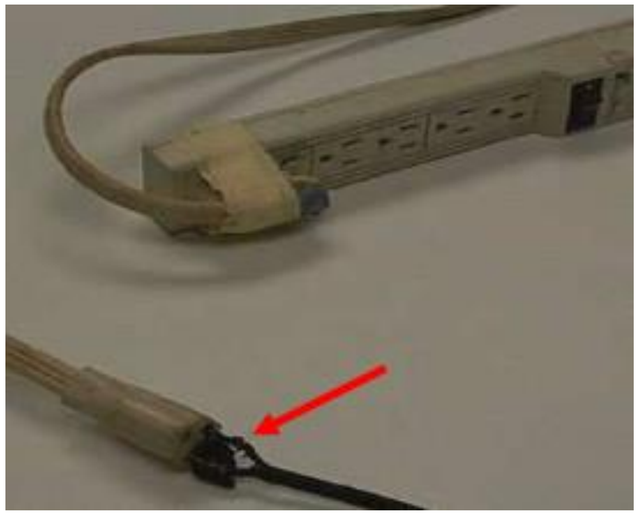
- Don’t run electrical cord through doorway or across a walkway.
  - It’s a tripping hazard, and the cord can get damaged from the traffic.

Don’t run an electrical cord through a doorway.

Extension Cord Safety

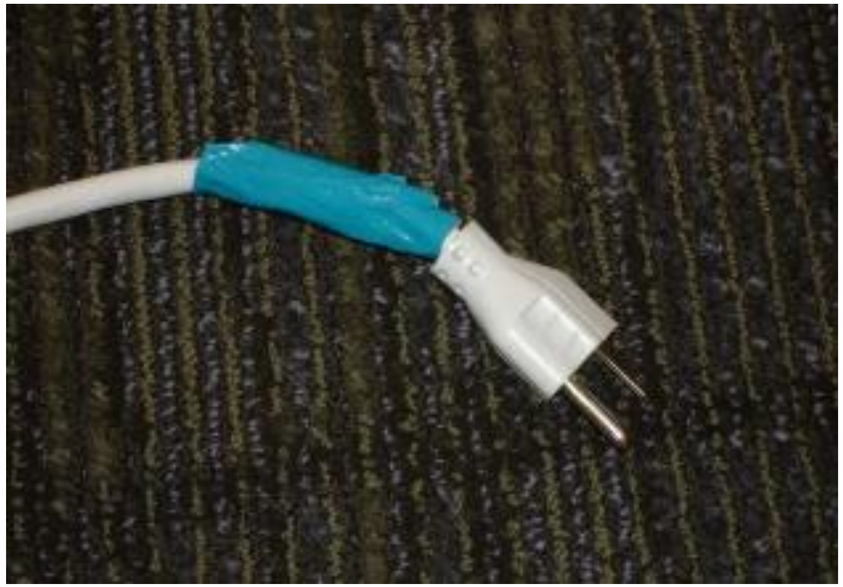
- Don’t use an extension cord that is cut, frayed, damaged or has exposed wiring.
- Reasons:
  - Touching the exposed wiring can give you an electric shock or burn.
  - Also, the cord can overheat and short circuit without the proper sheath insulation.





Extension Cord Safety

- Don’t repair exposed wiring by taping the cord with duct or electrical tape.
- Reasons:
  - Taping doesn’t provide adequate insulation.
  - You have to wrap the tape 100+ times around the cord to match the integrity of the original insulation sheath.
  - Inadequate insulation can cause overheating and short circuit.



Extension Cord Safety

- Don’t use extension cords or surge protectors for high-energy demand appliances and equipment such as refrigerators, microwave ovens, space heaters, toasters and copy machines.
- Reason:
  - The energy demand for these devices often exceeds the cord’s/surge protector’s load capacity, causing overloading, overheating, and the cord to short circuit.
- Alternative:
  - If possible, arrange the device so that it can be plugged directly into a wall outlet.