



City of East Lansing Fire Prevention Bureau

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Electrical Cord Safety

Electrical equipment cords and extension cords are used every day in homes and workplaces. Electrical shock and fire hazards are the two of the greatest hazards involved while using cords. There are some basic precautions that you can take to keep you and your family safe from harm when it comes to interacting with electrical cords and extension cords.

1. Keep unprotected cords out of the path of foot traffic and furniture to prevent fraying, overheating, and tripping.
2. Never run a cord under a rug. It prevents the cord from releasing its heat and could lead to a fire.
3. Don't leave cords dangling anywhere where they can be pulled down and tripped over.
4. Make sure there is no crimping or pressure on cords, and don't force them into small spaces or behind furniture. Over time this could lead to a breakdown of the cord's insulation. When using cord-bundling devices, such as Cable Turtles or plastic spiral wire wrap, avoid cramming too many cords together. Keep it loose.
5. Never use staples or nails to attach cords or cord bundlers to a surface, such as a baseboard or a wall. They could puncture the insulation and create a shock or fire hazard.
6. Choose the proper cord for the application in which it's used. Make sure it's the proper length and that the wire size is appropriate for the current load being used. Also never exceed the current rating of the cord.
7. Don't use an adapter to get an extension cord with a three-prong plug into a two-prong outlet.
8. Don't plug extension cords together. Instead use one long enough for your purpose.
9. Don't use an extension cord to plug in a power strip nor vice versa. Instead buy a strip with a longer cord.
10. If a cord is hot to the touch, take it out of service.