Extension Cord Safety

Handout

DO:

✓ Understand potential hazards associated with the use of extension cords.

✓ Choose the right length and gauge extension cord for the job by checking the cord label and the label on the electrical equipment the cord will be used with to determine wattage rating.

✓ Select cords specially constructed to resist moisture, heat, or chemicals if these conditions exist in the area where the cord will be used.

✓ Inspect extension cords carefully before each use to make sure the cord and plug are in good condition.

✓ Insert the plug fully into the outlet and uncoil the cord to reduce the risk of overheating.

✓ Use a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) when using cords in wet or damp areas.

✓ Make sure electrical equipment is turned off before you plug it into an extension cord.

✓ Unplug extension cords when not in use.

✓ To prevent damage to outdoor cords, store them indoors when they are not being used.

DON'T:

✗ Use extension cords in place of permanent wiring—they are intended for only temporary use.

✗ Run extension cords across aisles or through doorways where they may be damaged or create tripping hazards.

✗ Run extension cords under rugs, which could cause the cord to overheat and start a fire.

✗ Attach extension cords to floors or walls with nails or staples, which could damage insulation, expose wires, and cause an electrical shock and/or fire.

✗ Use indoor cords outside.

✗ Plug one cord into another to make it longer, which could start a fire. Use a cord of the right length for the job.

✗ Use cords that have damaged plugs or insulation, which increases the risk of electrical shock.

✗ Try to patch or repair damaged extension cords yourself.