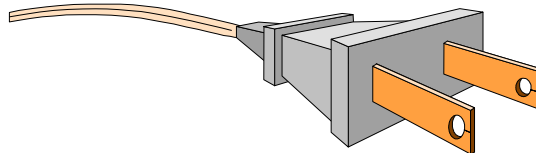


CUSTOMER FOCUS ON LOSS CONTROL

NUMBER 24

Extension Cord Safety



What's wrong with the plug in this picture? (See answer elsewhere on this page.)

Did you ever consider that a quarter-inch diameter cord could cause the loss of your business? In the case of extension cords and fires, it happens all too often. In a recent fire, more than fifty companies went out of business temporarily because of a fire caused by an extension cord. Only the presence of a fire wall prevented the total loss of the building, which was used for small warehousing and manufacturing operations. An extension cord ran from an outlet, underneath a door, and to a radio. The continual movement of the door on the cord eventually wore away enough insulation to allow the cord to heat and ignite. The result was a loss of nearly \$1,000,000. According to the National Fire Protection Association, 10% of fires between 1989 and 1993 involved electrical equipment arcing or overloading. If your business has never considered implementing a policy on safe use of extension cords, now is a good time. Consider these factors:

Problem	Control
Extension cords are intended for <i>temporary</i> use only.	If the workstation is permanent, install permanent wiring.
Cords that are too small for the job can overheat, melting the insulation and leaving bare wires exposed.	Wattage and amperage must meet or exceed the rating of the tool or equipment. Have qualified maintenance staff approve all situations where extension cords are used.
Extension cords are prone to damage from loose plugs, worn insulation, or other physical stress.	Establish an inspection program. Anyone can inspect the cords in their immediate area.

ANSWER: It does not have a grounding (third) prong.

The checklist on the other side of this page will help your company establish a program for safe use of extension cords. Please do not become a casualty of this often used, but as often overlooked, hazard.

This document is provided for information purposes only. It is not intended to be a substitute for individual legal counsel or advice on issues discussed within. Readers seeking resolution of specific legal issues or business concerns related to the captioned topic should consult their attorney and/or insurance representative.

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Extension Cord Inspection Checklist

Safety Factor to Check	Action Taken	Target completion date
Is this a permanent job? If so, use permanent wiring.		
Does the cord wattage and amperage match the tool or equipment?		
How many cords are currently used in this area? Reduce this number, if possible to do so safely.		
Are cord plugs and cords in good condition? Insulation not pulled away from the plug? Insulation not cracked or missing?		
Are plugs in good condition? Prongs not bent or missing?		
Are cords kept off the floor? (where they might be rolled over, crushed, or worn out)		
Are cords kept away from positions in which they might be caught in moving equipment?		
Are cords kept away from heat sources? (motors, ovens, etc.)		
Are cords kept out from under or over doors, or away from moving objects that can wear off their insulation?		

Employee:	Department:
Position:	Inspection Date: