AT THE END OF THE WORKDAY, EVERYONE GOES HOME SAFE.

Extention Cord Safety Toolbox Talk

IDAHO AGC
THE CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATION

Electrical hazards are an area of major safety concern in construction and account for a large number of injuries and fatalities. Even workers that aren't electricians are going to be using electricity every day to do their job. Extension cords are found on any construction site and reminding crews about safe use of extension cords is important because their hazards are often overlooked.

"About 4,000 [extension cord-caused] injuries each year are treated in hospital emergency rooms."

How Dangerous are Extension Cords?

You may not look at extension as a threat, which is exactly what makes them dangerous. About 4,000 injuries each year are treated in hospital emergency rooms. Half of these involve fractures, lacerations, contusions, or sprains from people tripping over extension cords. Roughly 3,300 home fires originate in extension cords each year, killing 50 people and injuring about 270 more.

Guidelines for Safe Usage of Extension and Flexible Cords:

- Never keep an extension cord plugged in when it is not in use, since the cord will still conduct electricity until it is unplugged from the outlet. All extension cords should be unplugged at the end of shifts or when work has been completed, whichever comes first.
- Examine extension cords before each use. Cracked, frayed, or otherwise damaged cords should be replaced immediately. Touching even a single exposed strand of wire can result in an electric shock or burn.
- Store all cords indoors when not in use; outdoor conditions can deteriorate a cord over time.
- When working outdoors, use only weather-resistant, heavy gauge extension cords marked "for outdoor use." These cords have added safeguards designed to withstand the outdoor environment.
- Keep all outdoor extension cords and light strands clear of snow and standing water and well-protected from the elements.
- Never file or cut the plug blades or grounding pin of an extension cord or appliance to plug it into an old outlet.
- If the ground plug has "fallen" out of an extension cord, discontinue use of the cord immediately.
- Do not plug one extension cord into another, unless it's allowed by the manufacturer.
- Never plug an extension cord into an electrical source with wet hands, or if either end of the plug is wet. Do not come in contact with or use any electrical items while standing in water.
- Remember that extension cords are meant to provide a temporary solution and should not be used as a long-term or permanent electrical circuit.

Real World Application:

A construction worker was using a coring machine to make holes in a concrete floor. The 120-volt machine was powered by two extension cords connected together. One cord was missing its grounding prong. The cords were plugged into a permanent electrical outlet. He placed the coring machine where he wanted to make the hole. When he turned on the power, the worker received an electrical shock that he later died from.

Talking Points:

1. How could this death have been avoided?
2. Have you or someone you know been injured due to an electrical extension cord?
3. What other threats may an extension cord pose on a construction site?

Date: ______________________________

Instructor Name/Signature: ______________________________

Translator Name/Signature:

Full Name (print)	Signature	Company