

Environmental Health and Safety Office (EH&S)

Extension Cord Safety

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide safety guidance to those persons employing the use of electrical extension cords at the University of Texas at Arlington main and satellite campuses. The use of electrical extension cords is integral to activities such as student organization events, tailgating during sporting events, mobile food trucks, temporary outlets to power appliance and devices, etc. Wrongful use of electrical extension cords carries unintended hazards described below.

2. Applicable To

This document is applicable to any person employing the use of electrical extension cords at the UTA main and satellite campuses.

3. Extension Cord Hazards

- Pose a tripping hazard
- Can be damaged in doorways or by being walked on.
- Subject to everyday wear and tear.
- Can short circuit if damaged or overloaded and cause a fire.
- Can short circuit if rated amperage is exceeded (overloaded) and cause a fire.
- Frayed electrical cords can pose to people who work with them including a severe risk of electrocution.

4. Extension Cord Safety Tips

- Use only 10/3 Outdoor Rated Extension Cords, Maximum Length 25' for cooking appliances.
- Do not substitute extension cords for permanent wiring.
- Do not run through walls, doorways, ceilings, or floors. If a cord is covered, heat cannot escape, which may result in a fire hazard.
- Do not use an extension cord to power more than one appliance.
- Heavy reliance on extension cords is an indication that you have too few outlets to address your needs. Have additional outlets installed where you need them.
- Multiple plug outlets must be plugged directly into mounted electrical receptacles; they cannot be chained together.
- Make sure the extension cord or temporary power strip you use is rated for the products to be plugged in and is marked for either indoor or outdoor use.

- The appliance or tool that you are using the cord with will have a wattage rating on it. Match this up with your extension cord, and do not use a cord that has a lower rating.
- Never use a cord that feels hot or is damaged in any way. Touching even a single exposed strand can give you an electric shock or burn.
- Never use three-prong plugs with outlets that only have two slots for the plug. Do not cut off the ground pin to force a fit. This defeats the purpose of a three-prong plug and could lead to an electrical shock. Never force a plug into an outlet if it doesn't fit.
- Use extension cords with polarized and/or three-prong plugs.
- Use cord protectors over the length of the cord.
- Procure and use only cords approved by an Underwriters Laboratories (UL).
- Pull on the plug, not the cord, when removing an extension cord from the outlet.
- Do not use an extension cord when it is wet or damp.
- Store extension cords on storage reels.

5. Review

Procedure review will be performed annually or as needed.