

Safety Newsletter



Central Region
School Insurance Group

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EXTENSION CORD SAFETY ----- TAKE NO CHANCES!



We often use extension cords but overlook the hazards that using extension cords present. Did you know that there are about 4000 injuries and 3300 fires associated with extension cord use every year? So, despite common belief, extension cords ARE out to get you! Extension cords are very useful devices, but they can present a fire or shock hazard when either worn out or used improperly.

- Extension cords come in either two or three-wire types.
- Two-wire extension cords should only be used to operate one or two small appliances and no more than 3 standard strands of lights.
- Three-wire cords are used for outdoor applications and electric power tools.
- Extension cords must be treated with care and checked regularly for damage or deterioration.
- The cord itself should *never* be *pulled* to disconnect it from an electrical source; remove it by the plug.
- Extension cords should not be placed under rugs or furniture and should never be strung through doorways, windows, walls, ceilings, or floors.
- Damaged cords present a potential fire or shock hazard and should be destroyed and replaced immediately. Don't try to fix it with tape!
- An extension cord should never be used as a substitute for permanent wiring.
- Do not fasten to a building or structure, even though staples are sold for this purpose at hardware stores.
- Avoid plugging two cords together to make a longer one.
- Extension cords which are either connected together, or are too long will reduce operating voltage and may cause appliance damage.
- Use good housekeeping practices to keep extension cords from being a tripping hazards or becoming damaged.
- Inspect them regularly for wear. Replace defective units.



Prevent potential electrical hazards that may lead to an injury!



Prevent Back Injuries - Avoid Awkward Postures
Awkward postures - like bending and reaching, increase effort, cause fatigue, and can result in injury. In many cases they're wasted motions that increase the time to perform a task and reduce the quality of work.

Examples of Awkward Postures:

- Working with the arms raised.
- Bending at the back.
- Bending at the neck.
- Twisting.
- Reaching.
- Bending the wrists.
- Kneeling or squatting.



We have all been told to avoid back injury by bending our knees when we lift, keeping the load close and avoiding twisting motions. These safety rules may be appropriate for simple, direct lifting of materials, but what about back care when you are working in awkward positions? Work tasks that require you to reach or stretch away from your body while handling materials can also put excessive strain on the vertebral discs and soft tissues in the back. An awkward position is a work posture that distorts the spine from its natural curves, puts unbalanced pressure on the discs, and can strain arm, leg or back tissues if held for any length of time. What are some work situations that may put you in "awkward" positions?

1. Jobs that require you to bend at a table or to reach into bins or containers.
2. Overhead work, installing or servicing equipment, pulling wire, cleaning ceilings, etc.
3. Floor or ground level jobs such as installing or servicing equipment, cleaning, etc.
4. Work tasks in confined or small spaces where there is limited range of motion such as closets and crawl spaces, etc.
5. Jobs on ladders, work platforms or scaffolding where you may over-reach to adjust, clean, install or service.
6. Pulling loads, instead of pushing them, when removing equipment or other materials.
7. Repetitive tasks that require twisting of the back.

So, how can you avoid injury when working in one of those awkward positions?

- Raise tables or containers off the floor and/or tilt them to reduce bending and over-reaching.

- When working overhead, stand on a steady and adjustable platform. Keep your back posture in its natural curve.
- If working on the floor, avoid bending over to work. Squat down using your leg muscles and wear cushioned knee pads if you have to kneel at work.
- In confined spaces, plan your work, and reduce clutter in the area which confines you further and increases the need to twist or overreach. Also arrange for adequate illumination.
- Don't hold an awkward position for too long. Pause often to stretch and straighten out.
- When leaning forward to work, support the weight of your upper body on your free hand and arm, whenever possible. This greatly relieves pressure on your lower back.
- Position yourself as close as possible to the job, avoid overreaching. Use tools with longer handles.
- Never lift heavy loads that are far away from your body's center of gravity. Get help.
- Keep the load in your "power zone". Position your work below the shoulder and above the knees to minimize over-reaching.
- Push, rather than pull, loads. This will help maintain the spine's natural curve.



- Stay home except to get medical care.
- Monitor your symptoms.
- Get tested as soon as possible after your symptoms start.
- Get rest and stay hydrated. Take over-the-counter medicines, such as acetaminophen, to help you feel better.
- Call ahead before visiting your doctor.
- If you are sick, wear a well-fitting mask.
- Consult your local medical authority for advice

BEAT THE HEAT

Use the online heat index calculator at <https://www.hpc.ncep.noaa.gov/html/heatindex.shtml>using temperature and either dew point or relative humidity.



Hot conditions can be life threatening, especially to those not accustomed to the heat, those with medical issues – like hypertension, and those taking certain medications.

Follow these guidelines to help you beat the heat:

- Try to stay in air-conditioning.
- Drink plenty of water
- Avoid strenuous activity
- Stay in the shade as much as possible
- Wear loose fitting, light colored, light weight clothing

Call 911 if someone has these symptoms:

- Hot, dry skin
- Confusion
- Unconscious
- Chest pains
- Shortness of breath

See the chart below for Heat Index threat values and possible problems you could face with prolonged activity in the heat and/or exposure to the heat.

°F	90%	80%	70%	60%	50%	40%
80	85	84	82	81	80	79
85	101	96	92	90	86	84
90	121	113	105	99	94	90
95		133	122	113	105	98
100			142	129	118	109
105				148	133	121
110						135

HI	Possible Heat Disorder:
80°F - 90°F	Fatigue possible with prolonged exposure and physical activity.
90°F - 105°F	Sunstroke, heat cramps and heat exhaustion possible.
105°F - 130°F	Sunstroke, heat cramps, and heat exhaustion likely, and heat stroke possible.
130°F or greater	Heat stroke highly likely with continued exposure.

CoViD 19 ---Protect Yourself and Others

Get a vaccine and wear a mask

Vaccines: COVID-19 vaccines are effective at keeping you from getting COVID-19, especially severe illness and death. Vaccines are safe, effective, and free!

- To help protect yourself and others from COVID-19:
- Get vaccinated and stay up to date on your COVID-19 vaccines.
- Everyone ages 2 years and older should properly wear a well-fitting mask indoors in public in areas where the COVID-19 Community Level is high, regardless of vaccination status.

Other Tips to Prevent Infection:

- Avoid poorly ventilated spaces and crowds.
- Test to prevent spread to others.
- Wash your hands often. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Clean high touch surfaces regularly or as needed and after you have visitors in your home. If someone is sick or has tested positive for COVID-19, disinfect frequently touched surfaces.

Monitor your health daily. Self care - If you have possible or confirmed COVID-19: