

Protecting Our Parishes, Missions, and Schools

Safe Tips for Extension Cords

Accident Data

- The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that 4,000 people are treated in emergency rooms each year because they were injured while using extension cords.
- Half the injuries involve fractures, lacerations, contusions, or sprains from people tripping over extension cords.
- About 3,300 residential fires start with extension cords each year, killing 50 people and injuring about 270 others. The most frequent causes are short-circuits, overloading, damage, and/or misuse of extension cords.

Do's and Don'ts

- If an extension cord is not marked for outdoor use, use it indoors only. The UL label will tell you if it is okay for outdoor use.
- Inspect the cord before you use it. Look for areas that are cracked or frayed. If you find any, dispose of the cord.
- 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. Don't use a cord that has a lower rating.
- Don't run extension cords through doorways, or through holes in ceilings, walls or floors.
- Make sure the appliance or tool is off before you plug it into the cord.

- Make sure the plug is fully inserted in the outlet.
- Don't remove, bend or modify any of the metal parts of the cord's plug.
- Don't plug a three-prong plug into a two-hole cord.
- You shouldn't have to force a plug into an outlet.
- If the plug is too loose in the outlet, the outlet may be too old and need to be replaced.
- Some cords are polarized; one prong on the plug is larger than the other. Match up the outlet and the cord.

During Use

- Keep away from water.
- Don't use it when it is wet.
- Keep it away from children and pets.
- Don't plug one extension cord into another.
- Don't overheat the cord. Uncoil it, and don't cover it with anything.
- Don't drive over the cord. Don't drag it or lay anything on it.
- Don't walk on it.

After Use

- Unplug it.
- Remove it from an outlet by pulling on the plug, not the cord.
- Store it indoors.



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