



Use Extension Cords Safely!

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Arlington, Va. -- An extension cord can be a handy, temporary way to place electrical equipment wherever you'd like it. But if used improperly, extension cords can cause fire and injury - even death.

May is National Electrical Safety Month. As its sponsor, the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) urges homeowners to be alert to the potential hazards of inappropriate extension cord use.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) estimates that each year, about 4,000 injuries associated with electric extension cords are treated in hospital emergency rooms. About half of the injuries involve fractures, lacerations, contusions, or sprains from people tripping over extension cords. Thirteen percent of the injuries involve children under-five years of age; electrical burns to the mouth accounted for half the injuries to young children.

CPSC also estimates that about 3,300 residential fires originate in extension cords each year, killing 50 people and injuring about 270 others. The most frequent causes of such fires are short circuits, overloading, damage, and/or misuse of extension cords.

To reduce the likelihood of electrocution or fire from improper extension cord use:

- Use extension cords only when necessary and *only* on a temporary basis.
- In locations where furniture or beds may be pushed against an extension cord where the cord joins the plug, use a special "angle extension cord" specifically designed for use in these instances.
- When using outdoor tools and appliances, use only extension cords labeled for outdoor use.
- Use polarized extension cords with polarized appliances.
- Insert plugs fully so that no part of the prongs are exposed when the extension cord is in use.
- Replace cracked or worn extension cords with new #16 gauge cords that have the listing, of a nationally-recognized testing laboratory, safety closures, and other safety features.

The Electrical Safety Foundation International reminds you to use extension cords safely - your life may depend on it.

To download ESFI's free booklet, *Use Extension Cords Safely!*, go to <http://www.esfi.org/esfi-library.html> - [extensioncord](#).

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Founded in 1994 through a joint effort between Underwriters Laboratories Inc. (UL), the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and the National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA), the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) is North America's only non-profit organization dedicated exclusively to promoting electrical safety in the home and workplace. ESFI is a 501(c)(3) organization funded by electrical manufacturers and distributors, independent testing laboratories, utilities, safety and consumer groups, and trade and labor associations. ESFI sponsors National Electrical Safety Month each May, and engages in public education campaigns and proactive media relations to help reduce property damage, personal injury and death due to electrical accidents. The Foundation does not engage in code or standard writing or lobbying and does not solicit individuals. For additional electrical safety information, visit the Foundation's Web site at www.electrical-safety.org or call 703-841-3229.