

Safety Training Brief

Provided by Prins Insurance, Inc.



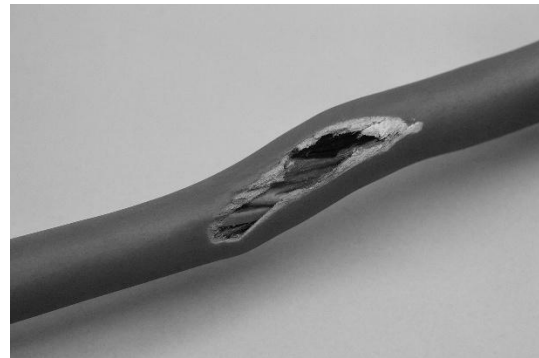
EXTENSION CORD SAFETY (GENERAL INDUSTRY)

This resource serves as a training aid for those conducting safety meetings, toolbox talks or tailgate sessions. Presenters should review it beforehand, emphasize the most important information and tailor the discussion to site-specific conditions.

Hazard Overview

Extension cords are commonly used in the workplace to provide temporary power, but they can introduce several hazards if not selected, used or maintained properly. Electrical shock or electrocution can occur due to damaged insulation, exposed wires, improper grounding, or use in wet or damp conditions. Overloading extension cords or using cords that are not rated for the connected equipment can cause overheating, increasing the risk of electrical fires.

Extension cords can also create physical hazards, such as tripping when cords are run across walkways or work areas. Improper routing through doorways, windows, or under rugs can damage cords and increase both trip and electrical risks. Because extension cords are intended for temporary use, relying on them as permanent wiring can lead to excessive wear, hidden hazards, and increased risk of injury, fire or equipment damage.



*The above image shows a damaged section of an extension cord. This is an example of a cord that could be removed from service.
Source: OSHA*

Safe Work Procedures

The following procedures can prevent property damage and help keep workers safe when using extension cords:

- Conduct a visual inspection of extension cords before each use, checking for cracked or frayed insulation, missing or damaged pins, and exposed wires. Inspect the entire cord from end to end.
- Remove damaged cords from service immediately.
- Use extension cords only for temporary power needs.

- Select extension cords rated for the intended load, amperage and environment. Additionally, all extension cords should bear the mark of a nationally recognized testing lab, such as the Underwriters Laboratories (UL).
- Ensure cords are connected securely at both the outlet and the equipment.
- Keep extension cords away from standing water.
- Use ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protection when using extension cords in wet or damp environments.
- Maintain good housekeeping by organizing cords neatly and avoiding tangles.
- Route cords away from walkways, aisles, stairways and doorways whenever possible.
- Keep slack in flexible cords to prevent tension on electrical terminals.
- Protect cords from sharp edges, pinch points, moving machinery and vehicle traffic. Use cord protectors if a cord must cross an aisle.
- Unplug extension cords when not in use. The cord should be unplugged by pulling on the plug, not the cord, to prevent damage.
- Store extension cords properly by coiling them loosely and placing them in designated storage areas when not in use.

What Not to Do

The following procedures can help workers stay safe when using extension cords:

- Do not use extension cords as permanent wiring or leave them in place for long periods.
- Do not overload extension cords by plugging in equipment that exceeds their amperage rating.
- Do not force an extension cord plug into an outlet.
- Do not use cords with damaged insulation, exposed wiring or missing grounding pins.
- Do not use indoor-rated cords outdoors or in wet environments.
- Do not splice, tape or modify extension cords.

- Do not secure cords with nails, staples or metal fasteners.
- Do not plug two cords together to make a longer one. It's better to use one longer cord in a continuous length.
- Do not daisy-chain multiple extension cords together.
- Do not place cords where they can be driven over, pinched or crushed.
- Do not ignore signs of overheating, such as discoloration or burning odors.

Take Action

Complete one or more of the following activities with workers to reinforce the safety messaging. The following activities are sample activities that can be performed.

Stat to Share: According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, approximately 4,000 extension-cord injuries are treated in hospitals each year.

Demonstrate: Show employees how to properly inspect an extension cord for damage, including cuts, cracked insulation, exposed wires, loose plugs and missing grounding pins. Make sure to remind workers to take their time and inspect the entire extension cord.

Demonstrate: Show examples of cords that should be taken out of service and explain why. Ideally, use extension cords from your workplace that have been taken out of service. Alternatively, pictures can be used.

Ask: How can you tell if a cord is rated for the equipment you're using?

Ask: When is GFCI protection required?

Point of emphasis: Remind employees of just how serious electrical hazards can be. Go over how to properly inspect an extension cord before use and what to do if an issue is found.

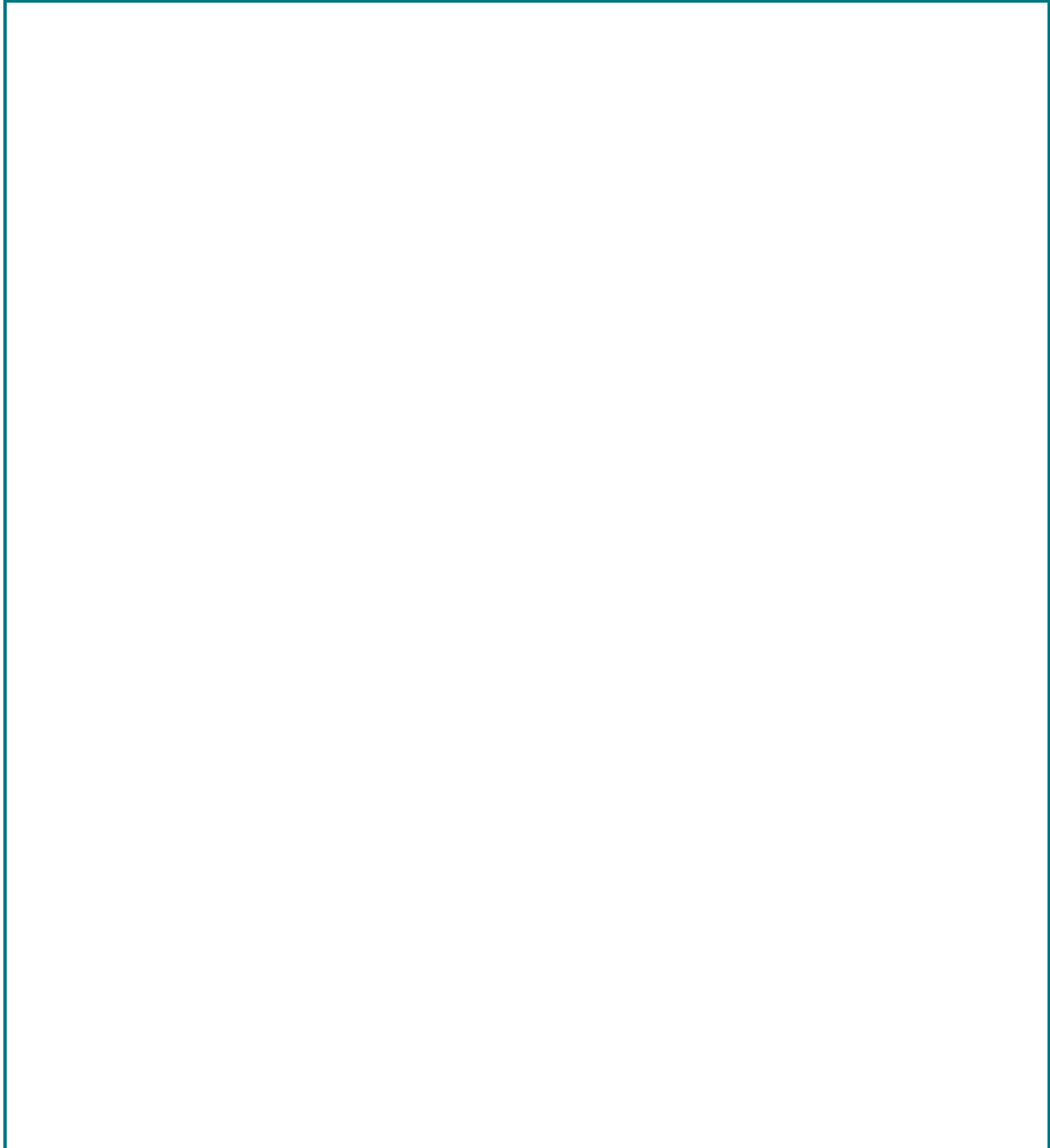
Applicable Standards/Regulations/Policies

The following list provides notable applicable standards, regulations and guidance. Please note that additional federal and state rules may apply, as well as company safety policies.

- OSHA 29 CFR 1910.303 (General Electrical Requirements)
- OSHA 29 CFR 1910.334 (Use of Equipment)
- OSHA 29 CFR 1910.305 (Wiring Methods, Components and Equipment)

Notes

During safety talks, employees may share safety concerns or ideas, whether general or related to the topic being discussed. If these come up, note them down and provide them to the safety manager or the person responsible for safety follow-ups.



Safety Training Roster

Topic: _____

Organization: _____ Date: _____

Presenter: _____ Presenter's Signature: _____

Participants

By signing below, participants confirm they attended this safety talk. They understand this was a general overview and not a replacement for formal training or written procedures. Each person is responsible for following all safety rules and consulting their supervisor if they need clarification or encounter any unsafe conditions.

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