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# Extension Cords

*Keeping your home hazard-free*

# Extension Cords

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According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, an estimated 4,000 people are treated at emergency rooms each year after they are injured in mishaps involving electric extension cords. About half the time, people tripped over cords and suffered fractures, lacerations, contusions, or sprains. Thirteen percent of the injuries involve children under-five years of age; electrical burns to the mouth accounted for half these injuries.

CPSC also estimates that 3,300 home fires originate in extension cords each year, killing 50 people and injuring about 270. Frequent cause include short circuits, overloading, damage, and/or misuse of extension cords.



For more safety resources, visit [safetycenter.navy.mil](http://safetycenter.navy.mil)

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- ✓ Use extension cords only when necessary and only on a temporary basis.
- ✓ If an extension cord is not marked for outdoor use, use it indoors only. The UL label will tell you if it is OK for outdoors
- ✓ 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 cords do not dangle from counters or tables where they can be pulled down or tripped over.



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- ✓ 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. Insert plugs fully so that no part of the prongs are exposed when the extension cord is in use.
- ✓ When disconnecting cords, pull the plug rather than the cord itself.
- ✓ Don't remove, bend or modify any of the metal parts of the cord's plug. Use only three-wire extension cords for appliances with three-prong plugs. Never remove the third (round or U-shaped) prong, which is a safety feature designed to reduce the risk of shock and electrocution.
- ✓ Don't plug a three-prong plug into a two-hole cord.



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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 on lay anything on it.
- ✓ Don't walk on it.



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After use:

- ✓ Keep away from water. After use: Remove it from an outlet by pulling on the plug, not the cord.
- ✓ Store it indoors.
- ✓ Unplug it when not in use.

Some cords are polarized; one hole on the plug is larger than the other. Match up the outlet and the cord.

Don't use staples or nails to attach extension cords to a baseboard or to another surface. This could damage the cord and present a shock or fire hazard.

Use special, heavy duty extension cords for high wattage appliances such as air conditioners, portable electric heaters, and freezers.

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