

Extension Cords

This standard is intended to provide general electrical safety information to faculty, staff and students to ensure that extension cords in use comply with good safety practices and fire codes, and therefore minimize shock and/or fire hazards inside and outside buildings at the University of Guelph.

An extension cord is a flexible electrical power cable with a plug on one end and one or more sockets on the other end. Extension cords provide a convenient method of delivering AC power to a device that is not located near a power source. As such, they are heavily used and also are often involved in electrical code and safety violations.

All of the following apply:

- Extension cords shall only be used for temporary purposes; once the task has been completed, the cord shall be disconnected and properly stored away for future use. Extension cords do not replace the need for installation of outlets (permanent wiring) where necessary. If work requires equipment in a certain area then you need to request additional outlets.
- Use extension cords that are the correct size or rating for the equipment in use:
 - the diameter of the extension cord should be the same or greater than the cord of the equipment in use.
 - the cord shall be of sufficient current-carrying capacity to power the device. Extension cords are normally rated in amps, and shall be used within the ampere rating (compare the ampere rating of the equipment with the rating of the cord).
 - extension cords shall be made of heavy-duty or extra heavy-duty rated cable and must be a continuous length.
- An undersized cord is a fire hazard.
- Extension cords shall have approvals by Underwriters Laboratories (ULC) or Canadian Standards Association (CSA); see label attached to cord.
- Extension cords shall be three-conductor (grounded) even if the device has a two-conductor cord. Two-conductor extension cords are not permitted.
- Extension cords shall be inspected before each use and properly maintained with no exposed live parts, exposed ungrounded metal parts, frays, kinks, splices or other damage.
- For portable and other electrical equipment:- always follow the manufacturer's instructions with respect to the use of extension cords.
- Extension cords shall be kept away from areas where they may be pinched and areas where they may pose a tripping or fire hazard (e.g., doorways, windows, walkways, under rugs, mattresses, between furniture, etc.). Do not run extension cords above ceiling tiles or through walls and they shall not be permanently secured to any structural member.
- Damaged extension cords shall be replaced.
- Extension cords used in wet and/or outdoor locations shall be protected by ground fault circuit interrupters.
- Placing multiple extension cords in series (daisy-chains) is not permitted.

Failure to use and maintain extension cords according to the requirements above may create a fire or shock hazard that puts you or others at significant risk.

For further inquiries, contact Environmental Health and Safety at (519) 824-4120 Ext. 53282 or by email at ehs@uoguelph.ca [1].

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[1] <mailto:ehs@uoguelph.ca>