



Loss Control Safety Techniques



Extension Cord Safety

Extension Cords – Shock and “OWWW!”

Extension cords have been in use as conveniences since the mid 1940s. Available in various lengths, thicknesses and service duties, if used improperly, they can also become fire and shock hazards. A general rule of thumb is the more power needed to operate an appliance or tool, the thicker the extension cord should be.

Types of Extension Cords

Extension cords generally are available in two or three-wire varieties. Two-wire extension cords are best used to operate one or two small appliances at a time. Three-wire cords are best suited for outdoor appliances and electric power tools. The third wire in the cord is a “ground” wire. It should never be plugged into an ungrounded electrical outlet. Only grounded extension cords are to be used with power tools unless the tool is double-insulated. Extension cords used at construction sites, for example, must be specified for hard or extra hard usage by the National Electric Code. Approved cords are typically identified by the word “Outdoor” or the letters “WA” on the cable jacket.

Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCI) are required whenever connected to a temporary source of power such as a temporary pole, generator, or an extension cord connected to the permanent wiring of a house.

Inspection and Safety Guidelines

- Perform regular checks for damage and deterioration of the cord
- To disconnect from an electric source, remove it by the plug – never pull on the cord itself
- Do not place under rugs or furniture
- Never string the extension cords through doorways, windows, walls, ceilings or floors
- Replace damaged cords immediately and destroy the damaged cord
- Extension cords should never be used as a substitute for permanent wiring
- Avoid joining two or more extension cords – a reduction in the operating voltage or operating efficiency may result and motor damage is possible
- Use good housekeeping practices so the extension cords do not become tripping hazards
- Use electrical extension cords that are listed/labeled by Underwriter Laboratories (UL)

Extension Cord safety is no accident. Be safe. Take note of the topics and recommendations discussed in this bulletin. We encourage you to put them into practice – doing so helps ensure your safety. It is the philosophy of Frankenmuth Insurance and your Independent Insurance Agent to provide services that give policyholders peace of mind. At Frankenmuth Insurance, we truly are with you all the way.

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