



SAFETY ADVISOR

DECEMBER 2023

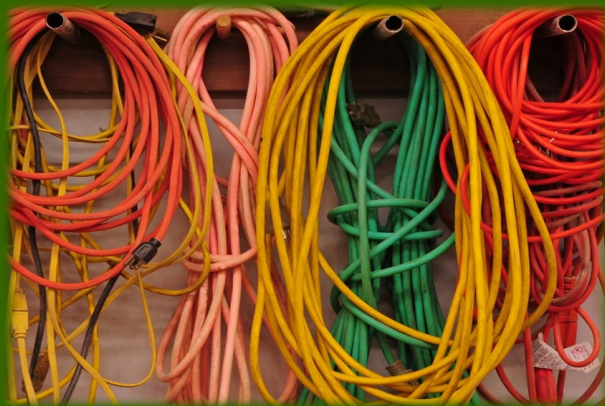
Extension Cords (In Time for Holiday Decorating)

By Keith Myhre

Central Office, FDOT Occupational Safety and Health Programs

When the State Fire Marshal performs the annual building inspection for fire safety, extension cords and power strips are two of the prime focal points during the walk-through inspection. Why? Because these two items are some of the most misused pieces of our electrical supplies. And, if it's happening at work, it probably happens at home too!

The benefits of extension cords are numerous. We have a moveable outlet at our disposal to drag from room to room around our house, up stairways, out to the garage, deck, our yard, and patio. In older offices and homes, the number of outlets may be inadequate. Our ability to cover greater areas around the home or office with ease can surpass our attention to using these cords safely. I have witnessed questionable displays of extension cord "creativity" at home from some of my family members. Let's look at some standard Do's and Don'ts of extension cord etiquette. *(continued next page)*



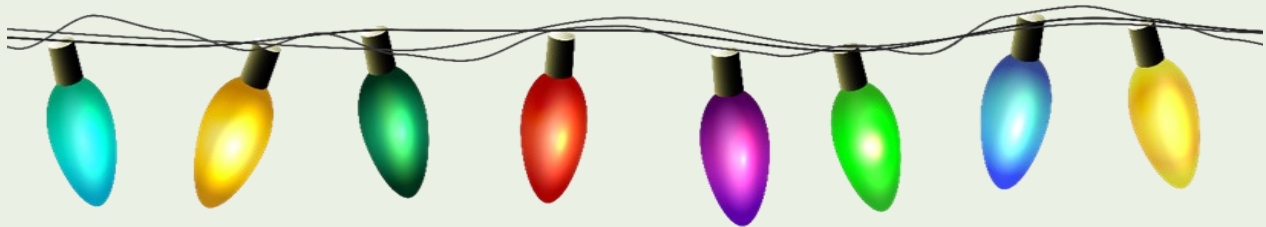
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Extension Cords *(continued)*

Do:

- ◆ Do inspect an extension cord for physical damage before use. (If a cord is damaged, discard it)
- ◆ Do identify a “UL” symbol on all extension cords in your use.
- ◆ Do keep extension cords out of water and use a GFCI protected outlet in any damp environment.
- ◆ Do unplug extension cords when not in use.
- ◆ If working outdoors, do verify that your extension cord can be used outdoors.
- ◆ Do consider using an extension cord with a built-in GFCI (ground fault circuit interrupter). These are a benefit when your outlet is not a GFCI.
- ◆ Do keep cords out of frequent foot traffic areas.



Don't:

- ◇ Don't use an indoor extension cord for outdoor use. Most indoor extension cords will NOT have a 3-prong plug and are NOT insulated for outdoor use.
- ◇ Don't overload extension cords with multiple appliances.
- ◇ Don't leave cords across doorways or furniture.
- ◇ Don't force a plug into an outlet. Or, jerk a plug from an outlet.
- ◇ Don't bend or modify the extension cord plug prongs.
- ◇ Don't daisy chain (multiple cords) extension cords or power strips together.
- ◇ Don't nail or staple extension cords to any other object.

“Daisy chaining” is attaching multiple extension cords, power strips, or a mix of the two, which will create current overloads leading to tripped circuit breakers or cords overheating and the risk of an electrical fire.

Purchasing an extension cord? Look for the words “indoor” or “outdoor” on the packaging.

Fire Safety for the Holidays

By Keith Myhre

Central Office, FDOT Occupational Safety and Health Programs

According to the National Fire Protection Association, the use of candles in the home contributes to 45% of fires annually during the month of December. The added combustibles of wreaths, garland, Christmas trees, paper, and boxes, make for a home that is loaded with potential fuel.

The National Safety Council is promoting a targeted list of safety measures that should be included in our holiday preparations. Whether at work or in our homes, review these safety points that promote indoor fire safety.

- Place candles where they cannot be knocked down or blown over, and out of reach of children.
- Don't burn trees, wreaths or wrapping paper in the fireplace.
- Consider using a fireplace screen when a fire is burning.
- Never leave candles or the fireplace burning unattended or when you are asleep.
- Check and clean the chimney, flue, and fireplace area at least once a year.
- If using a live tree, cut off at least 2 inches of the trunk to expose to a water. **Keep it watered** while inside your home.
- Live Christmas trees should be kept at least 3 feet from fireplaces and not blocking doorways.
- Tie a small rope, at least 6 feet long, to the tree stand. Keep it stretched away from the tree so that if the tree catches fire, it can be pulled with the rope, out the door to the outside, minimizing smoke and fire damage to the inside of the house.
- Replace light sets that are broken, have poor connections, or exposed wiring.
- Follow directions as to how many light sets can be plugged in to one socket. Long wiring means more heat.
- Turn off lights and other electrical decorations when you go to bed or leave the house.

Sources: National Safety Council and the National Fire Protection Association.



Ergonomics in the Workplace

This Month's Focus: Standing

While LAST month's focus was healthy sitting, this month we are looking at why we should NOT make a habit of sitting.

Improving your cardiovascular health can be as simple as replacing 30 *minutes of sitting* with another activity, results of a recent study from England show.

Since 1997, the number of people living with cardiovascular disease has doubled globally, according to a University College London press release. In 2021, it was responsible for a third of all deaths.

Researchers at the university examined six studies involving more than 15,000 people from five countries to assess how various movement patterns throughout a 24-hour period are linked to heart health. Each participant wore an activity tracker and had their cardiovascular health measured.

Sitting and inactivity are major culprits of cardiovascular risks, the researchers found. They created a model showing what would happen if an individual changed various amounts of one behavior for another each day for a week, to estimate the effect on heart health for each scenario.

For example, a 54-year-old woman with an average body mass index of 26.5 who replaces 30 minutes of sitting or lying with moderate or vigorous exercise could experience a 2.4% decrease in BMI, a 2.7% decrease in waist circumference or a 3.6% drop in hemoglobin A1C – used to measure blood sugar level.

Although increasing the amount of vigorous activity can be the fastest way to improve heart health, the researchers say people of all abilities can benefit by lowering the intensity and lengthening the time of an activity.

"This encouraging research shows that small adjustments to your daily routine could lower your chances of having a heart attack or stroke," James Leiper, associate medical director at the British Heart Foundation, said in the release.

The study was published in and courtesy of, the European Heart Journal.

Let's Get Everyone Home Safely This Holiday Season

Find a dash of 'Do Not Disturb' and a sprinkle of your favorite playlist at TargetZeroFL.com/Distracted

RECIPES FOR THE ROAD — HOLIDAY SERIES

EASY HOLIDAY COQUITO

INGREDIENTS NEEDED:

- 2 cans (12 oz.) of evaporated milk
- 1 can (15 oz.) of cream of coconut
- 1 can (13.5 oz.) of coconut milk
- 1/2 cup of sweetened condensed milk
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon of cinnamon
- Grated nutmeg or cinnamon sticks for garnish

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Combine the evaporated milk, cream of coconut, coconut milk, sweetened condensed milk, vanilla extract, and ground cinnamon in a mixing bowl.
- Blend mixture on high for 1–2 minutes or until well combined. Pour mixture into glass bottles.
- Cover, place in refrigerator, and chill for 30 minutes or until cold.
- Before serving, stir or shake bottle well. Pour coquito into small holiday themed glasses.
- Garnish with grated nutmeg or cinnamon sticks and share with friends and family.

ENJOY THIS
RECIPE?

Post a photo of your
creation and tag us
#LetsGetEveryoneHomeSafely



Did You Know?

Fire departments and alarm manufacturers strongly suggest that our home smoke alarms should have new batteries installed twice a year. Both during daylight savings time, in spring and fall.

Did you change out the batteries for your smoke alarms in November?

1. Change battery
2. Then press and hold the button to test the alarm.

**If you cannot do this yourself, contact your local fire department. Staff will change out the battery as part of their public service.*



The Safety Advisor is distributed electronically to all FDOT staff monthly, to promote indoor and outdoor workplace safety and generate an overall awareness for safety in our lives. It is produced monthly by the State

Safety Office in Tallahassee, Florida.

For content information or ideas, please email Keith Myhre

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See Department safety information at: <https://www.fdot.gov/safety>

Anonymously report hazards in your workplace: (850) 414-5255

