

# Safety Short

## SAFE USE OF EXTENSION CORDS



Improper use of extension cords is a common cause of fires and workplace electrical accidents.

### GENERAL SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXTENSION CORDS

- ✓ Cords should only be used for temporary “in hand now” tasks.
- ✓ If not in use for a period of time, then they should be unplugged and coiled up. (Vehicle heater cords are the exception).
- ✓ Cords should always be uncoiled before use. Otherwise, they can heat up and the insulation can be damaged. Avoid kinking and excessive bending.
- ✓ Extension cords should always be used with ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protection.
- ✓ Only heavy duty extension cords, 14 AWG or larger, should be used in the workplace. Ungrounded “zip cords” should not be used.
- ✓ Care must be taken not to pinch cords with equipment, furniture, vehicles, or allow excessive foot traffic over them. Never run extension cords under rugs.

### PROHIBITED USES FOR EXTENSION CORDS

Safety standards prohibit certain uses for extension cords. They are:

- **Use in lieu of permanent wiring.** If a cord is used as a “permanent” fixture in your workplace, then you need an electrician to install more receptacles!
- **Through holes in walls and ceilings**
- **Concealed behind walls or ceilings**
- **Attached to building surfaces**
- **Through doors and windows or against sharp surfaces**

