



TAILGATE SAFETY

ELECTRICAL CORDS

Electrical cords (extension cords and power cords for portable tools) are probably the most abused tool on the job, they are walked on, driven on, yanked on, and used to pick up and carry tools. Without electrical cords, many of the tools we use to get the job done wouldn't work. We tend to take this important tool for granted and assume that it will always provide safe, shock free service. If the insulation and/or outer sheath are damaged the chance of injury is high, so the following are some tips on taking care of your electrical cords:

- Inspect your cords periodically for crushing, outer sheath damage, fraying, missing plugs, etc.
- Consider the properties of the cord prior to any splicing. The National Electric Code states that only electrical cords that are Hard Service No. 12 or larger can be spliced. Even then, the cord can only be spliced if the insulation, outer sheath properties, and usage characteristics of the cord are retained. When in doubt – replace don't splice.
- Never use flexible cords as a replacement for fixed wiring.
- Do not run flexible cords through holes in walls, ceilings, or floors.
- Do not run flexible cords through openings where they could be crushed, such as doors, windows, etc.
- Throw away damaged cords. An injury costs a lot more than a new electrical cord.
- Replace any plugs that do not have the grounding prong.
- Replace broken plugs immediately or take the cord out of service until it can be fixed.
- Immediately repair strain relievers that have been pulled loose from tools or plug ends (or take out of service until it can be repaired).
- A qualified electrician should perform repair work on electrical cords.
- When using extension cords, always use the correct size conductor for the length and the rated amperage.
- When picking up a power tool, don't pick it up and carry it by the cord.
- Cords should never be used as a rope.
- Store cords appropriately and they'll last longer.
- Even if the cords are provided by your company, take care of them as if they were your own.

Training Tips: a) Use a "bad" cord as a prop to illustrate some of the points above. b) Outline your company policy regarding splicing of cords (splice or toss out?). c) If you provide extension cords, let your employees know who they should talk to if they have questions or need a new cord. D) Include inspection of all cords on your Worksite Inspection Form.



North Coast Builders Exchange ~Tailgate Topics
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