

Extension cords are common and convenient, but when used without proper safety precautions they can become fire hazards and pose risks to worker safety.

A GFCI is a fast-acting circuit breaker that senses small imbalances in the circuit caused by current leakage to ground and, in a fraction of a second, shuts off the electricity. It protects against the most common form of electrical shock hazard—the ground fault, and protects against fires, overheating, and destruction of insulation on wiring.

- Never remove the grounding pin on an extension cord plug to try to fit it into a two-prong outlet.
- Do not use indoor extension cords on outdoor projects.
- Fully insert the extension cord plug into the outlet.
- Do not secure extension cords to surfaces with staples or nails.
- If any extension cord in use begins to feel hot to the touch, remove it from service immediately.
- Ensure extension cords are not routed through puddles, standing water or snow.
- Do not plug or unplug an extension cord while your hands are wet.
- Do not use multiple extension cords connected together, use a longer extension cord instead.
- Store extension cords indoors when not in use.
- Inspect extension cords for physical damage before use. Check for cracked or frayed sockets, loose or bare wire, missing grounding prongs, and loose connections.
- Damaged extension cords should be removed from service and disposed of properly.
- When disconnecting an extension cord from a power outlet pull the plug, don't yank on the cord.
- Keep extension cords away from foot traffic to prevent tripping and cord damage.



GFCIs can be used successfully to reduce electrical hazards on the job. Tripping of GFCIs—interrupting current flow—is sometimes caused by wet connectors and tools. A GFCI will not protect a worker from line contact hazards such as

- Holding two “hot” wires
  - Holding a hot and a neutral wire in each hand
  - Contact with an overhead power line
- GFCI protection may be anywhere on the circuit as long as it works effectively to protect the worker. Protection may be for the entire circuit, the outlet receptacle, or the extension cord.



GFCIs can pose serious risks if you take for granted they are working correctly.

- Test GFCIs before their first use, before the first use following repair, after any incident, as well as on a regular basis at least every 3 months.

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